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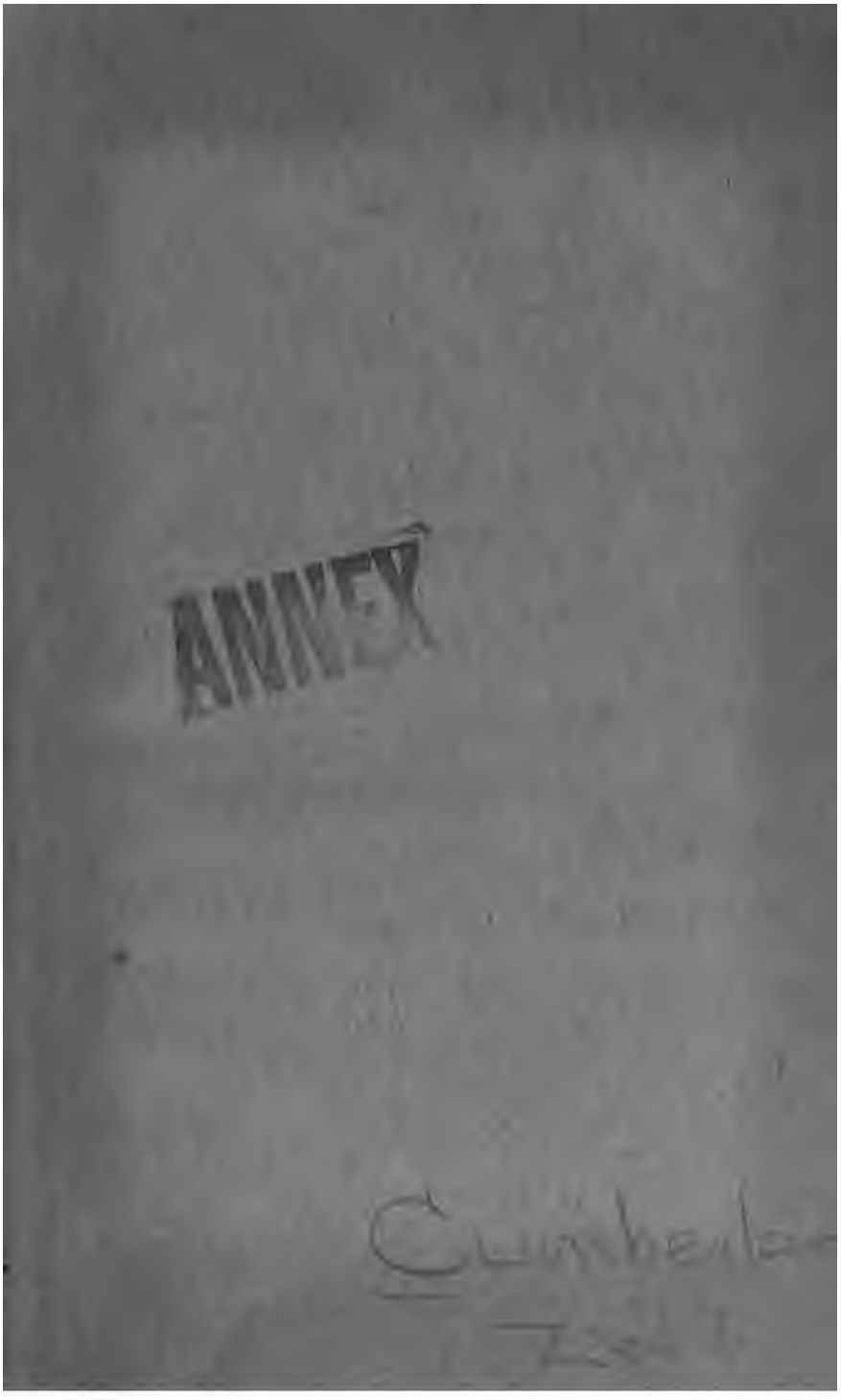
ANNEX

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS,

ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS OF

DIVINITY,

SO MUCH

CONTROVERTED IN THE WORLD:

WITH

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE RISE OF THE

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

AND OF ITS

PROGRESS TO THE PRESENT DAY.

PRINCETON, KY.

Office of the Religious and Literary Intelligencer.

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PREFACE.

In a country of equal rights, it is the privilege of every one to think freely, investigate fairly, and explain in the most simple, plain and candid manner. Truth acknowledges no dependence on sophistry for success. It relies alone upon fair argument, and, when properly understood, appears well even in a homely dress.

It is the duty of every branch of the church, when circumstances require it, to give her view of what the Bible teaches. Concealment, double-dealing and mental reservations, in such cases, should always be carefully avoided.

The Cumberland Presbyterians have adopted a system of doctrines, in the belief and practice of which they are, perhaps, as firm and uniform as any other denomination. While they claim the privilege of believing that this system is fully sustained by the word of God, they are very far from arrogating to themselves INFALLIBILITY in interpreting the holy scriptures. They have ever maintained, that a difference in subordinate points of doctrine, ought not to constitute *separate communions* or destroy the UNITY of the church of Christ.

Although they have adopted and published to the world, a Confession of Faith, and a system of church government; yet they have probably been remiss in not giving these formularies a more general circulation. In this they are entirely singular. Other branches of the church exercise a laudable diligence in putting the volume containing their peculiarities in the hand of every individual within their reach. They thereby manifest not only sincerity in their belief, but a wish to disseminate what they deem correct principles.

The Cumberland Presbyterians have heretofore, manifested but little interest in writing and publishing arguments for the purpose of defending the doctrines of their church. Their fields of operation have been large and white unto harvest and have required the active and constant labors of all their preachers. This, in connexion with a desire to *fraternize* with all religious denominations, has been, perhaps, of some disadvantage to them. It is still hoped, however, that they will forever banish that little sectarian bigotry that has on some occasions emanated from the presses of other branches of the church.

The following thoughts and historical sketch have been elicited by frequent applications from abroad, for information concerning the doctrines and origin of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, of which the writer has the honor of being a member. He hopes they will not infringe upon that spirit of *harmony* and *union* which he wishes at all times to prevail among evangelical denominations.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS,

ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS OF

DIVINITY.

ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

"GOD is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable in his Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth," possessing in himself the rule and power of his own actions.

There are two ideas concerning the nature and actions of Deity, both of which have been carried to extremes. One is that holiness *is not* essential to his existence; that it *is not* the source of the motives of his volitions and actions at all; but that it depends entirely on his sovereign will. The other idea is, that God is essentially Holy; in which consists the essence of the moral law, which, when revealed, became the rule of action to every moral subject; yet, his knowledge and power, with regard to sovereign influence and the certainty of action, are abridged. It maintains the certainty of rule and freedom of action, but leaves him without the knowledge and control of his subjects.

The following view of this subject, seems to me to accord best with scripture and reason.—God is essentially holy, without which he could not exist; for quality belongs both to spirit and matter. Matter cannot exist without the quality of gravitation; spirit cannot exist without a quality inclining it either to good or evil.—Therefore, you see that God must be holy. This is the lustre and glory of his character, the rule of all his volitions and actions, from which he can never deviate. All that he does, is holy, not because he possesses absolute freedom of will, but because his will always acts according to his own nature. If the holiness of God depended on his agency or volition, it follows, of course, that he could not be Holy until he desired to be so; or, in other words, decreed what he

liness should be. Then, here would be a volition without holiness, and, also, without motive. If there be no principle of rectitude in the divine being, nothing can be done right; if nothing can be done right, there can be no glory. But, God is holy, and whatever consists with holiness he can do, and whatever will contribute most to his glory, HE *will do.*

As holiness is the principle, out of which all the motives and volitions of Deity spring, it is evident that he never could have decreed sin, without going out of himself for a motive; and if he were to go out of himself for a motive, he would cease to be a self sufficient and perfect God. If holiness cannot present sin as a motive, God never could choose sin; if he could not make it his choice, he could not bring it to pass by his agency.

Infinite knowledge is as essential to the existence of God, as consummate holiness. While one renders every thing that he does correct, the other makes all things certain, that transpire in the universe.

Some have thought that God's knowledge of events rested solely on his decrees; that he could not know that any thing would take place but for a previous determination to bring it to pass. This hypothesis either proves that God is the author of sin, or that he knows nothing of its existence, both of which would be contrary to divine revelation. It is indispensable that an intelligent being should know all that he does, but it is not necessary for him to do that all he knows. If God can know any thing without first decreeing it, he can know many things. Hence, I conclude, that many events *have* and do transpire, which, though known unto God, were never predestinated by him. I think the following is a correct view of this subject. All things are known unto God, yet he knows some things as taking place, on or by his own agency, others, on the principle of necessity, and others on the principle of man's agency.

Knowledge must always go before volition; a choice without understanding, is a blind choice, and the action is not that of an intelligent being.

ON THE TRINITY.

There is one God. There is but one. There can be but one. But this one God is often spoken of in the Old Testament by means of the plural number, "Let us make man, &c." The New Testament reveals how many persons there are, and likewise their different names, viz. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Unity of God is taught in the Bible. The Trinity and equality of God are taught in the Bible. The Trinity and inequality of God are taught in the Bible.

There are certain peculiarities, which constitute the Trinity of God, certain peculiarities, which constitute the Trinity and equality of God, and certain peculiarities which constitute the Trinity and inequality of God.

Infinite perfection constitutes the Unity of God. There is but one infinity. There can be but one. There are three persons, subsistences, or agents, that possess infinite perfection and are one God. Power to will and work constitutes an agent. The Father has power to will and work, the Son has power to will and work, and the Holy Spirit has power to will and work, therefore they are all agents. They are not one agent, but one God, possessing infinite perfection. They are distinctly objects of worship. One is not older or greater than another.

But, there is a sense, in which they are three, and not equal. In the plan of man's redemption, one was appointed to overlook, and a name given him appropriate to his office. He is called the Father. Another to obey and suffer. He is called the Son. Another to apply the redemption to man by converting and sanctifying him. He is called the Holy Ghost, not because he is more holy than the Father and the Son, but because his office is, to make men holy.

But the skeptic exclaims, I cannot understand this TRINITY in UNITY. I answer, your understanding was never intended to be the standard of truth. There are many truths entirely above your comprehension. All that you have to do, or can do, is, to determine whether it would be more reasonable to receive or reject them. Did you ever know a circle three feet in circumference, inclose one of ten feet? *Infinite fulness dwells in Christ.* If he had a beginning in *all* his natures, he must be finite: then, here

would be finite, containing infinite! Whether the doctrine of the Trinity be comprehensible or not, it is a matter of divine revelation, and demands our faith. But am I told that mystery is inconsistent with the idea of a revelation from God. This I deny. A revelation is a developement of facts, and is not at all affected, though the mode by which the facts exist be withheld. The Trinity is a fact revealed, and notwithstanding the mode of the existence of this fact is not disclosed, its claims upon our credulity cannot be denied, without becoming downright Atheists; for a God existing in one person, is as incomprehensible as a God in three persons.

It is something remarkable, that in every age, where the UNITY of God, in opposition to the TRINITY has been taught, infidels express great friendship for the system. This must be owing to the fact, that there is something in this system agreeable to the carnal heart, and contrary to divine revelation.

ON THE CREATION OF MAN.

Man was created with wisdom to *know*, and power *to do*, all things which came within the capacity of created free agency. This alone could constitute him an accountable being. He of course possessed determining power. To say that man is a free agent, and yet hold that God determines his will by physical power, is, to me, a palpable contradiction. The light and motive system, which is, that the will of man is determined by an *over balance* of motive is equally absurd; for, in this case, the *motive* would contain the physical power. I, therefore, contend, that the agency of man in his primitive state, consisted in an ability to decide between two opposite motives, neither of which exerted any *physical force* on his will.

He was, also, either holy or unholy *in nature;* for we have already shown, that every intelligent being must have a *disposing quality.* That this quality in man was *holy*, is evident from the consideration, that nothing of a contrary character can proceed from a Holy God.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

The government of God is a *holy* and *wise* polity, including sovereignty, necessity and free agency in his subjects. I am persuaded, it would be impossible to conceive of a well organized government without these three particulars. A government founded altogether on sovereignty is *despotic*, and precludes the necessity of laws, and destroys the freedom of its subjects. The design of laws, is, that the subjects may shape their characters by them.—But in a government possessing nothing but *sovereignty*, neither law nor subjects can have any thing to do in forming characters. Sovereignty alone does this. Then, why are laws necessary, and on what principle can subjects, in this case, either be accountable or punishable? It is neither an action nor the consequences of an action, abstractly considered, that render the subject of it guilty; but the exercise of *free agency*, in the perpetration of that action. Punishment then becomes necessary, and this prepares the way for the exercise of sovereignty. Thus, you see how these three particulars harmonize in a well organized government.

ON THE LAW OF GOD.

There is a universal and immutable law, generally called *moral*, which is not dependent on sovereign power for its existence, but grows out of the eternal reason of things, and regards all circumstances of intelligent beings, and enjoins the duties which they owe to God and each other. Without such a universal standard of right and wrong, there could be no distinction between virtue and vice.

This law is the great plat-form on which heaven itself is built, and on which Adam was placed in his state of innocence: but while on trial, he fell from this plat-form, and can never return to it again by any efforts of his own. If he is ever brought up to the righteousness and holy nature of the law, it must be by the aid of another. For this pur-

pose, the gospel scheme has been introduced, which serves as a ladder on which fallen man may not only return to that state of holiness and happiness, possessed by Adam before he fell, but to that confirmed state, which he would have enjoyed, had he sustained his trial. But the gospel is not designed to destroy the law, any more than the making of a ladder to reach a plat-form, is designed to destroy that plat-form.

If a sinner would ascend to this desirable plat-form, he must climb the gospel ladder, by repentance and faith.

Every one must conform to this law that would be happy; and it is not material how many rational beings there are, nor where they reside, nor how many peculiarities attend them, if they be conformed to it, they will be happy; for they all harmonize: and without a universal and immutable law, or standard of moral rectitude, they *would not*, and *could not* harmonize. This is evident, even from the law of matter. If, for instance, one particle of matter be under a different law from another, how could they harmonize? If Mercury were under a different law from Venus, or the Earth, how could there be harmony in the solar system? There is harmony in the solar system; therefore, there is an immutable, and universal law of matter: and it is by the same law, that the lofty pine falls, that the autumnal leaf drops to the ground.—And so we may suppose, not only of a great number of bodies of matter, but of a great number of peculiar systems of matter; yet as far as matter extends, the immutable law by which it is governed, is founded: hence, there is general harmony throughout the natural world. Just so in art: if you wish to build an edifice, it is not important where you prepare the materials, provided you make every part according to an immutable rule: when put together each joint will fit and all will harmonize. But if you were to make one part according to one rule, and another according to another rule, your building would neither possess wisdom, strength nor beauty.

The same will apply to civil matters. Let the law of virtue be immutable, and millions of rational beings be governed by it, and general harmony will prevail; but if they were to be governed by laws differing *in principle* from each other, it is evident a harmonious system could not be formed. For example: Life and liberty are the

natural rights of all men. On this principle the Constitution of the thirteen United States was adopted; yet each State was tolerated to have a constitution of its own, adapted to its local circumstances, but could not introduce a single article contrary to the principles of the general constitution. This would have destroyed the harmony of the several states.

In ecclesiastical affairs, harmony is also based upon certain immutable principles. Love to God and each other, should constitute the grand principles of our church government. Embracing these principles of government the church may be divided into several territories, and each one introduce a discipline adopted to its own peculiar situation; yet if the grand principles (love to God and each other,) be preserved, all can unite and form one harmonious body. But wherever these immutable principles are touched by a Creed or Discipline, that denomination holding such, can never be received into the union by the Great Head of the church.

Then, my brethren, let us be careful not to introduce such rules in our churches as would destroy love to the brethren, and produce distraction in the body of Christ. We are all one in Christ Jesus: let us therefore keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

ON THE FALL OF MAN.

Man, though made upright, was not confirmed. To create an intelligent being in a confirmed state, would destroy his agency; but to create him pure and free, and give him a probation, in which his fidelity can be tested,—if he prove faithful, he can then be confirmed according to character formed during the trial. The condition on which man was to be confirmed, was obedience to a positive command founded on the moral law. His agency in this state of trial was tested in a very simple manner. God commanded him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and enforced the prohibition, by the threatening of death to himself and posterity. But promised life in case of obedience.

That Adam might have a view of the state in which he was placed, and, also, of that which was promised him, God placed two trees before him, viz. the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which represented that the condition in which he was then placed admitted of his acting so as to know good and evil; and the tree of life, representing, that if he obeyed the positive precept, he should be confirmed in a state of complete happiness.

After man had violated the positive command, God placed a cherubim with a flaming sword, which turned every way, to guard the tree of life, lest man should put forth his hand and eat and live forever, or be confirmed in a state of sin and misery.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE MEDIATOR.

Jesus Christ possesses *three simple distinct natures*, viz: *Supreme divinity*, spirit and matter. These three natures though united in one person, are not amalgamated. Man has two simple natures—spirit and matter. Spirit can suffer, but cannot die; matter can both suffer and die. In addition to these two natures, Jesus Christ has divine nature, which can neither suffer nor die. These *three*, constitute him a complete Mediator for man. Like man, for whose benefit he came into our world, he had a nature that could suffer and die; a nature that could suffer, but could not die; and as *God*, he had a nature that could neither suffer nor die. This nature gave worth or virtue, to the obedience and sufferings of his soul and body: so that a temporary suffering, on his part, was of more value, in the eye of the law, than eternal suffering on our part could have been. The soul and body being united to the divine nature, in person, it was impossible for the one always to suffer, or for the other to remain under the power of death. He, therefore, as our Mediator, took away the sting of death and the power of the grave, and brought life and immortality to light.

Man's death is a doctrine founded on the law: his resurrection is a doctrine founded on the gospel—*For as in*

Adam all died, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. As Christ arose for all men, he must have died for *all;* for the resurrection of *all*, is founded on his rising for *all;* and his rising for *all*, is founded on his having died for *all:* for he could not rise for any for whom he did not die.

ON THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

All agree, that Jesus Christ *died for sinners;* but whether he died only for a part, or the whole of mankind, we differ. Those, who contend, that Christ only died for a part of the human family, maintain, that that part was elected from eternity, to everlasting life, and that the rest of mankind, were fore-ordained to everlasting death. Others, believe that the death of Christ, was a governmental thing, intended merely to restore the honors of the law, by which all legal barriers have been removed, and that God may, upon the principles of justice, save all the human family; yet he only designs to save a part of mankind, whose hearts he changes by a sovereign act, without considering unbelief as a legal barrier, or sufficient to deprive the sinner of the blessing of regeneration.

On this subject, *I will also give mine opinion.* I believe, that Jesus Christ was chosen as the second head, and representative for all that were involved by the first Adam; that all the guilty, depraved sons and daughters of the first representative, were chosen *in* the second, not first to a state of glory, but to a state of trial. If they, during this state of probation, obtain a freedom from guilt, and a right to life eternal, then they are appointed to a state of glory. All mankind, by virtue of the atonement, have a personal opportunity of becoming confirmed for a state of happiness.

The gospel is proposed to us, as a covenant, in which we are made a party. We now have the terms of this covenant under consideration. But the gospel would be vague, if no time was specified, in which these terms must be complied with. It is necessary for the will of man to determine, while the condition of this covenant is before him,

to be saved by the second Adam. So soon as this determination takes place, he is justified—entitled to heaven—adopted into the heavenly family—and sealed to the day of redemption. On the other hand, the sinner that determines to reject Christ, after having had a fair opportunity of embracing the benefits of his death, is also sealed to everlasting misery.

ON THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

All that I will now say on this subject, may be resolved into three parts.

1*st.* *The necessity of divine agency.*

2*ndly.* *On what divine influence is founded.*

3*rdly.* *The extent of this influence.*

There is a necessity for divine agency in the world, not only to reveal the plan of salvation, and establish by prophecy and miracles, that plan, but to quicken the soul, by giving the true spiritual meaning of the system of salvation. Paul was *alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died.* He had been instructed in the letter of the commandment, but did not understand the spiritual meaning thereof. It was this spiritual meaning that he refers to, which came by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who dictated the commandment, and has not only a right to dictate, but also, to explain his own doctrine.

If man were only guilty, a simple declaration of the fact would be sufficient; but he is depraved also, by which I understand, *the head sick and heart faint.* His heart is not only opposed to the plan by which he is to be saved, but his understanding is dark, and he is ignorant of that plan. He, therefore, not only needs instruction, but quickening; for, no man can say, that *Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:—without holiness no man shall see the Lord:* and it belongs to his office to make men holy. There is, therefore, a necessity for divine influence on our hearts, in order to salvation—and what is necessary for the world, is necessary for every individual.

But, 2ndly. On what is divine influence founded? Some say on the revealed will, or word of God; and the reason why the spirit operates, is because men have that revelation; and *his* influence is only felt by those who have the *Bible*—and beyond the extent of the letter, there is no *Spirit*. But, I think, the only reason why the Spirit operates on the world, is because an atonement has been *made for the world* by the death of Christ. And, so far are his operations from being founded on the revelation, that, the revelation is founded on his *operation*. There was a *Spirit* before there was a Bible, or a Preacher, or a Church; and the Bible, the Preacher, and the Church, are the *effects* of his *operation*. *He* inspired the men who wrote the Bible —*he* calls the men who preach—convinces the sinner—and seals the believer to the day of complete redemption.

3rdly. As to the extent of divine operation, some who maintain the agency of the Spirit, seem to limit his operations to those, and those only, who have the Bible and other means of grace. They measure the extent of divine influence by the extent of the circulation of the written word. But, I think, we ought only to limit the Spirit's operation by the *atonement*. If, then, Christ tasted death for every man, and the atonement is *made for the world*, the world is the field of divine operation. I regard the written word, and all the means of grace, as excellant facilities of spiritual and moral instruction; yet, they only answer a similar purpose to that of a useful apparatus in an institution of learning, in which, the teachers presence is still necessary and his agency important—and, although his books may answer a valuable purpose, yet, he can learn a student without them.

How many hearts were converted before there was a Bible? It will not do to say that men only had the spirit of prophecy—they, also, must have had the spirit of conviction, to lead them to a knowledge of salvation. But, suppose we limit the spirit to the written word, or a knowledge of the written word, then, all infants, dying in infancy, as well as all idiots, are cut off from salvation.

There is a beauty in the *trinity*, and the most perfect unison of office, in our salvation.—The Father *loved the world*—the Son *died for the world*—and, the Spirit *convinces the world*. The *office* of the Spirit, is founded on the *office* of the Son; and the *office* of the Son, is founded on the

to be saved by the second Adam. So soon as this determination takes place, he is justified—entitled to heaven—adopted into the heavenly family—and sealed to the day of redemption. On the other hand, the sinner that determines to reject Christ, after having had a fair opportunity of embracing the benefits of his death, is also sealed to everlasting misery.

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office of the Father. The Father *loved all*, the Son *atoned for all*, and the Spirit *strives with all;* and to facilitate his work, he dictated the Bible—and now calls men to preach the gospel—convinces the sinner—and sanctifies the believer. O! may the spirit be poured out from on high, and the *wilderness become a fruitful field, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!*

ON THE WILL OF MAN.

That man is accountable for his actions—that an accountable being must be free—and that a free agent must possess determining power some where—are ideas generally believed by christians; but they differ very widely with regard to the origin of this power. Some think that man, though rational, is entirely incapable of volition or action, without the immediate agency of God, notwithstanding motives from Heaven, Earth and Hell may be present. Others believe that he forms all his volitions in view of motives, *without* immediate agency, and that the mind is preponderated by an *over-balance* of motive. Others again think that the will is not determined by the immediate agency of God, nor yet by an over-balance of motive, but that man, though fallen, has power to determine right and wrong, without divine influence.—They also deny the doctrine of the Trinity and operations of the Holy Spirit; while others, although they admit the doctrine of the Trinity, the operations of the Spirit, and the influence of motive to a *certain extent*,—yet they contend, that the will is not determined by the immediate agency of God, nor by an over-balance of motive, and that man, in his fallen state, has no *depraved self-determining* power to do good—that without something to counteract his depraved nature, it would constantly determine his will to evil; and although he would choose sin freely, yet he would choose it necessarily—for he could choose nothing else. But they hold, that by the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost, man's will is untrammelled, and restored to the privilege

of choosing heaven as well as hell. Hence, they think that he can do under the gospel what he could not have done without it, and what he cannot do, when the influence of the spirit shall be withdrawn from him. This last view of the will I think is correct, and it gives God all the glory of man's salvation and lays the guilt of damnation at every sinner's door.

But if it be said that man, by being placed under a dispensation of mercy and receiving the light and influence of the spirit of God, cannot determine either good or evil, without the *sovereign* and *immediate agency* of God, then, *Divine agency* must lie at the bottom of every volition and action of man, whether good or bad. This doctrine would present man as a mere instrument, and God the principal agent in all his actions, and must receive the praise or blame of all that is done. Indeed, upon this plan, I cannot see how sin could exist at all; for if it be by the agency of God that man sins, he must decree all the actions of man, and if he both decree and bring to pass all that man does, by his *own immediate agency*, all that is done, must be right; for God can neither decree nor execute that which is wrong. Is not this the foundation of *Universalism* and many other *isms* so destructive in the world?

To hang every volition on the power of motive, alone, may conceal, but can never remove the difficulty just noticed. True, this scheme presents the will as choosing freely, but it also chooses necessarily; for in whatever end of the scale you place the greatest weight, that end of course will fall; and it may fall freely too; yet, if it cannot turn the other way, it falls necessarily. One pennyweight in the other end of the scale would cause it to fall, and the first one to rise. So you see, that to govern the will of man by an *over balance* of motive, as effectually destroys his accountability as to govern it by *immediate agency*.

The doctrine that fallen man, unaided by divine influence, can choose salvation is also absurd. It robs God of all the glory of man's redemption, and is entirely inconsistent with the Bible.

The truth, then, seems to be this; fallen man can, upon the gospel plan, choose *life* or *death*, *blessing* or *cursing*. This is abundantly evident from the word of God "*Choose you this day whom you will serve.*"—Josh. xxiv. 15. "*Ye*

will not come unto me that ye might have life."—John v. 40. Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.—Rev. xxii. 17.

ON MAN'S AUTHORITY TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST.

Faith in Christ is composed of two parts—assent and consent to be saved on gospel terms. But is every sinner authorised to do this? I answer yes: every sinner to whom the gospel is preached, has sufficient authority to believe that Christ died for *him*, and therefore, is at liberty to believe in him.

1. Every sinner has negative testimony to believe that Christ died for him. "*Say unto them, as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.*"—Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish.*"—2 Pet. iii. 9. But negative testimony is not sufficient to induce a sinner to believe that God is willing to save *him*. Had God sent the whole human family to hell, without providing salvation for any, it would have been no more than the infliction of a just punishment; yet he would have had no pleasure in their death; therefore, a sinner must have positive, as well as negative testimony, before he can believe in Christ. This kind of testimony is also to be found in the Bible. "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*"—John iii. 16. "*Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto a knowledge of the truth.*"—1 Tim. ii. 4.

Before a minister of the gospel can assure any sinner that Christ died *for him*, and call on him to believe, he must have authority to say, that he died for every sinner. Without such authority he cannot urge one sinner to believe in Christ, without acting presumptuously. Nor has any sinner a right, without this knowledge, to believe in Christ: in so doing he would also act presumptuously.

Therefore, a preacher must have evidence to believe that Christ died for all men, before he can offer salvation to any; and a sinner must have evidence also to believe, that Christ tasted death for *every man*, before he can say he died for him. The Bible contains the *names* of no particular individuals for whom Christ died. God makes no private communication to either preacher or sinner on this subject. Therefore, it appears clear, that if God, the Father, only chose to save a part of mankind, and God, the Son only died for that part,—that neither the elect nor non-elect can believe in Christ. It would certainly be presumption for the non-elect to believe that God was willing to save them; it would be equally so, for the *elect* to believe without knowing that they were elected, and that Christ had died for them. But how are they to know this? Their names are not specified in the Bible; and to believe without the Bible, would be to believe without authority; and to believe without authority, would be acting presumptuously.

Suppose, for example, twenty men were in a state of starvation, and I were to make provision for one half of them, and send a message to inform them of it, without mentioning any names, would he be authorized to say to any one of this twenty, that *he was invited*. Surely not; nor could any *one* of the twenty, upon hearing this message, believe that he was interested in the provision. But, if I provide for the whole number, and send a messenger to apprise them of it, he is then authorized to invite all, and every one of the twenty can believe that the provision is *for him*, without acting presumptuously. Therefore, if the gospel in all its parts be not for all, but only a part of the human family, can a preacher in truth say, that it is for any individual sinner? What would be more presumptuous than for him to approach a sinner and inform him, that God had provided salvation for a part of Adam's race, and that he was one of that number. And it would be equally inconsistent for any sinner to conclude, that because God designs to save a part, therefore, he designs to save him. Thus you see, that if Christ has not died *intentionally* for all men, no preacher has a right to invite any sinner to the Saviour; nor has any sinner a right to believe in him.

But the fallen family of Adam have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto they would do well to take heed,

as a light that shineth in a dark place. They have general and particular testimony, as well as negative and positive, that Christ died *intentionally* to save them all. It is considered a sound maxim in Mathematics that the whole is equal to all its parts, and that all the parts are equal to the whole. John informs us that *Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our only, but also, for the sins of the whole world;* and Paul tells us, *that he tasted death for* EVERY *man.* Therefore, if the provision in the gospel be for ALL, and EVERY individual of the human family, then *any* and *every* sinner has authority to believe in Christ; and every minister of Jesus is at liberty, nay, it is *his duty* to offer salvation to *every* sinner, and to urge him to accept of it. In doing so, he is in no danger of transcending his authority. Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature. *Every part* of the *great whole* can and ought to believe—and *he that believeth not, shall be damned.*

ON EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

Man is depraved in heart and sinful in conduct, and of course, is an enemy to God, both by nature and practice, In conversion he becomes reconciled to the character and conformed to the government of God. This change is wrought by divine agency, though not without the concurrence of man's agency. The sinner cannot be saved without God, and God will not save the sinner without his consent.

Regeneration constitutes one link of the beautiful chain in the gospel plan of salvation.

1. God loved the world. 2. The world was elected in Christ to a day of grace. 3. Christ made an atonement for the world. 4. The Spirit reproves the world. 5. The operations of the Spirit prepare the way for conviction. 6. Conviction prepares the way for faith in Christ. 7. Faith in Christ prepares the way for justification. 8. Then follows adoption. 9. Then the spirit of adoption or regeneration. 10. Next sanctification or a life of holi-

ness. 11. And then follows glorification. This completes the *Golden chain.* Thus, you see, God provides and proposes, and man believes and receives.

Sound theory lies at the bottom of experimental religion, but there is something to be felt in religion as well as believed.

Many hold a correct system of doctrines, but it is to be feared they have never felt the power of those doctrines on their hearts—have never had the fallow ground of their hearts broken up by genuine conviction, or known what it is to pass from death unto life. It is not at all astonishing that such persons should feel opposition to heart-felt religion in others, and regard all excitement on the subject of religion as mere delusion. But what is more rational than for a sinner to be excited about the salvation of his soul? If this does not interest his feelings, surely nothing can. God is holy; he is unholy. A holy God will punish an unholy sinner.—He feels this to be true, and in view of his danger cries out like the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner;* or like blind Bartimeus, *thou son of David, have mercy on me;* or, like the Jailer, *sirs what must I do to be saved.*

Some are disposed to apologise for this disorder, as it would now be called, by saying the Jailer was converted in a miraculous way, alarmed by an earthquake, &c. But, upon reading the history it will be seen, that the earthquake was over before he awoke. Nor did he then discover any symptoms of conviction, but believing the prisoners were gone, would have taken his own life, had he not been prevented by Paul. When the apostle spoke to him, the spirit of God presented his sins in array before him, he fell down and cried out as thousands have done since, *sirs what must I do to be saved;* and presently we see him a converted man, rejoicing over his house. Thus, you see, the Jailer was neither convicted nor converted by an earthquake, nor by any *miraculous power,* but by the operations of the Holy Ghost.

Then, let those who oppose religious excitements beware, lest they be found fighting against the Spirit of God. I know that people may weep and make a noise without much feeling; yet it is repugnant to every law of our nature for deep feeling to exist without some external signs of it.

It is not for me to say how long a sinner must be convicted, nor how loudly he must cry before he can obtain religion; but thus much I will say, he must be so sensible of his lost condition, that he will freely part with his sins for Christ. It is a matter of no moment with me, whether he fall down or stand up, be silent or cry aloud—he may do either and not obtain salvation.—This requires an unreserved surrender of the heart to Christ. But as legal principles are interwoven in the very nature of man, he will not submit to be saved by another until he has exhausted his own strength. And when he does all in his power, and entirely fails upon the ground of his own merit—sees that it will not do to turn back to sin—feels the imminent danger of remaining where he is, and is so guilty and unworthy, that he is afraid to go forward,—yet this is the only alternative. He finds if he wait to get a good heart before he goes to Christ, he never would go. Therefore, he casts his all upon the Saviour, or in common language, gives up his heart to him and rests alone on him for salvation, acknowledging that it would be just to damn him, though he is *not willing to be damned*. At that moment, he is justified freely and renewed in the spirit of his mind. And, although all are not alike sensible that *this is religion*, yet all are sensible of the change. One thing they know, that, *whereas, they were blind*, now they see. Yet, owing to their preconceived opinions about how religion would come, and how it would feel, and being disappointed in these respects, it is not uncommon for those who are really born of God, to be afraid to recognize the change as being religion. They have obtained sight, but it is dim—*they only see men as trees* walking. This, however, is not the case with all. Some, at the moment of conversion, with an unfaultering voice, claim the spirit of adoption and cry out, *my Lord and my God*.

FAITH AND REGENERATION.

We have often heard from the pulpit, and sometimes seen from the press, speculations with regard to the order

in which Faith and Regeneration take place. Some suppose that Regeneration precedes Faith—others contend that Faith takes place first. As it relates to the nature of them, it is not important which is first; for they are inseparably connected with each other: yet it is evident, that one must take place before the other, and to pervert their order, would not only present a distorted system, but involve error.

Faith is an act of our own minds, founded on testimony afforded by divine agency. If it be first, then salvation is suspended on the *choice of man;* but if Regeneration ("which is effected, as some say, by physical power, without the concurrence of man's agency,") precede Faith, salvation is suspended on *divine agency.* If Faith be first, damnation is *suspended on unbelief;* but if Regeneration be first, then damnation is *suspended on God's unwillingness to change the heart.*

In order to render this subject plain to the weakest capacity, I will present Faith and Regeneration as *two stakes*, and from them run to their beginning corners, and then, to their respective ends. Let us suppose Regeneration to be first—

Q. Are all regenerated?
A. No.
Q. Why are not all regenerated?
A. Because the Holy Ghost will not do it.
Q. Why will not the Holy Ghost regenerate all?
A. Because Christ never died *intentionally* to save all.

Now, let us return. The Holy Ghost only regenerates those for whom Christ died—*intentionally.* Only those who are regenerated, can believe; only those who believe, can be justified; only those who are justified, can be adopted; only those who are adopted, can be glorified.

I now suppose the following dialogue to take place between myself and a glorified saint.

Q. Why are you thus glorified?
A. Because I was adopted.
Q. Why were you adopted?
A. Because I was justified.
Q. Why were you justified?
A. Because I believed.
Q. Why did you believe?
A. Because I was regenerated.

Q. Why were you regenerated?

A. The Spirit did it, without the concurrence of my agency.

Q. Why did the Spirit act thus?

A. Because Christ died, *intentionally*, to save me.

Q. Why did Christ die for you *intentionally?*

A. Because God loved me, and designed from all eternity, to save me.

This may appear plausible until we examine its counterpart. There are some sinners in hell, to whom I propose the following questions.

Q. Why are you in hell?

A. Because we could not be glorified.

Q. Why could you not be glorified?

A. Because we were never adopted.

Q. Why were you not adopted?

A. Because we were not justified.

Q. Why were you not justified?

A. Because we did not believe.

Q. Why did you not believe?

A. Because we were not regenerated.

Q. Why were you not regenerated?

A. Because the Spirit would not do it.

Q. Why would not the Spirit change your hearts?

A. Because Christ never died for us, *intentionally*.

Q. Why did He not die for you, *intentionally?*

A. Because God never designed to save us.

So, you see, by placing Regeneration before Faith, that the *damnation* as well as *salvation*, of every sinner is hung on *divine agency*.

Now let us put Faith *before Regeneration*, and trace it to its origin, and see what will be the result.—First, Faith, thence to testimony, which is afforded, that the world may believe: thence to the Holy Spirit, who is come to *convince the world of sin*, &c. thence to the death of Christ: thence to the love of God, which is the beginning corner of faith. Let us now run back from the beginning corner, to the end.—First, God loved the world; second, Christ died for the world; third, the Spirit strives with the world; fourth, the world may believe; fifth, those who believe are justified; sixth, those who are justified, are adopted; seventh, those who are adopted, receive the Spirit of adoption, or, are regenerated; eighth, those who are regener-

ated, are sanctified, and, those who are sanctified, are also glorified.

With this order of things, let me inquire of a glorified saint.—

Q. Why are you in heaven?
A. Because I was sanctified.
Q. Why were you sanctified?
A. Because I was Regenerated.
Q. Why were you regenerated?
A. Because I was adopted.
Q. Why were you adopted?
A. Because I was justified.
Q. Why were you justified?
A. Because I believed.
Q. Why did you believe?
A. Because I had testimony.
Q. Where did you get testimony?
A. From the Holy Spirit.
Q. Why did the Holy Spirit give you testimony?
A. Because Christ died for me.
Q. Why did Christ die for you?
A. Because God loved me.

Thus, you see, that Faith before Regeneration, brings the same glory to God, that Regeneration before faith does. In each case, the glorified saint ascribes all to divine agency. But it does more. It makes the damnation of the sinner turn upon his *own agency*. With Faith before Regeneration, I begin with a sinner in hell, and run back.—

Q. Why are you in hell?
A. Because I could not be glorified.
Q. Why could you not be glorified?
A. Because I was not sanctified.
Q. Why were you not sanctified?
A. Because I was not regenerated.
Q. Why were you not regenerated?
A. Because I was not adopted.
Q. Why were you not adopted?
A. Because I was not justified.
Q. Why were you not justified?
A. Because I did not believe.
Q. Why did you not believe?

A. Because I would not. Upon my own agency my damnation turned.

These are some of the reasons why I choose to put Faith before Regeneration. And I know of no other plan, that will embrace the doctrine which seems to be so clearly taught in the word of God, viz. that a sinner's damnation turns on his own agency.

CARDINAL POINTS.

The best way to decide points more obscure and less important, is by the more clear and important ones. They are generally more clear, while the less important are obscure. Every system has agreement and government. Just so with the system of divinity. I find in the creed of all orthodox christians the following sentiments, which I will set up at present, as leading or cardinal points, with which all our other sentiments will agree, if they be clear of error.

1st. There are some of Adam's family saved, and those who are saved are saved by grace, and God receives all the glory.

2nd. There are some sinners damned, and they are damned for refusing grace, and the guilt lies at their own door.

Now whatever may be the sentiments of christians, in other respects, they all agree in these two points. whether they be Calvinists or Armenians. If I thought I believed one doctrine which had a tendency to destroy either of these points, I would renounce it,—and would not every Calvinist and Armenian do the same? If I know my heart, I most firmly believe that some of Adam's family are saved, and those who are saved are saved by grace, and God receives the glory; and that some are damned, and that the fault is their own. No Calvinist can be more firm in the belief of salvation by grace, and no Armenian more settled in the belief of the guilt lying at the door of the sinner that is damned, than I am.

But, if our system only embrace one of the above points. there is error somewhere. Some think if they can only save the sinner by grace, they secure all the glory to God, and it is not material how others are damned, whether by divine agency or their own. But our system ought to operate *both ways* and secure *both points*. If we maintain a sentiment in our system which appears to contribute to the glory of God, yet if we hold another, that certainly tarnishes the divine glory, we will loose more than we make; we destroy more glory than we gain.

I will now present you with two systems, which, though they embrace one of the above points severally, yet neither of them embrace both.

There is one class of divines that hang every thing on sovereign agency: the system is called Predestination. This system considers every thing that comes to pass to have had a previous decree and is effected by divine agency. The doctrine of particular and eternal Election, limited atonement, and partial operations of the Spirit, is also connected with this system. It is contended that the will of all who are saved, is determined by divine influence to choose life, and all the others were either ordained to wrath or left unprovided for. Let us now run the line of this system, to see whether it will embrace both those leading points, by which we are to be governed. Some are saved, and saved by grace too, and God will receive all the glory of their salvation. But let us see whether the guilt of those who are damned, will lie at their own door. If every thing turn on divine agency, without the concurrence of man's agency, and those who are saved are saved by divine agency, we gain the first point. But the same agent that saves one damns another; so the other point is lost. Thus, you see, by hanging every thing on divine agency, man ceases to be the cause of his own damnation, and so the Calvinist looses more than he makes; for if he brings some glory to God by the first act, he looses more by the second than he gains by the first: therefore, there is error in his system somewhere.

A second system hangs every thing on man's agency, and teaches that man; though fallen, is capable of finding his way back to heaven, without the aid of divine influence. By this scheme, you can lay the guilt of the sinner at his own door; but this only secures one point—the other is

lost. Those who are damned, are the cause of their own damnation; but those who are saved, are saved by their own agency, and God is robbed of his glory: so it is evident there is error in this system also.

Neither of the foregoing systems will secure those cardinal points, which we stated in our outset; therefore, those who hang every thing either on divine sovereignty abstract from man's agency; or on man's agency abstract from divine agency, are evidently in error in some part of their plan.

I will now present you with a system which I think will secure both the points in question; therefore, it must be true.

The government of God is composed of four different parts. In this government some things take place on sovereign principles, others by the influence of established laws, others by man's agency, and others again, by a concurrence of divine and human agency. The will is not determined by divine agency, as the Predestinarian supposes, nor by an over-balence of motive, as the necessarian says, nor does man possess a *depraved self determining* power to do good, as the Unitarian says: but, by the intervention of the son of God, he is placed under divine influence, which counteracts his depravity, untrammels his will, and renders him capable of choosing life as well as death, blessing as well as cursing; and in this situation, he possesses determining power—not a *depraved self-determining* power —but a determining power of the ability that God giveth. And as he is an agent in the government, he has ability to perform his part and is held accountable for what he can do, and ought to do. God will do his part in the government, but he will not do man's part—man can and must do his own.

But some object to any thing turning on man's agency, and to his having ability to do any thing. Those generally who hang every thing on divine agency, suspend the knowledge of God on his decrees, and say that God knows every thing, because he has decreed every thing; and those who hang every thing on man's agency, generally say that God does not know every thing. or that he possesses the capacity of knowing every thing; yet does not choose to exercise it. But, I would remark, that an intelligent being must know all he does, but it is not neces-

sary that he should do all he knows; God must and does know all he does, but he does not do all he knows. His knowledge is infinite, and comprehends what he will do himself, and what every other being will do; yet he is not the author of all he knows. He is, therefore, the proper judge of all the earth; *for known unto him are all things, and the judge of all the earth will do right.*

In order to embrace those leading points under consideration, all must have an election to a state of trial. Hence all Adams family were chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, that they might, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, be made holy and become personally the elect of God, and chosen or set apart to a state of glory.

Therefore, as all were chosen in Christ, to a state of trial, the atonement was made for all. All, then, have an election, and founded on that election, is an atonement for all. Then, if the Father chose all, and the Son atoned for all, in order to have perfect unison in the office of the united THREE, all must come into this world under the office of the Holy Spirit, and a measure of his influence must be given to every man as well as a general influence: he must convince the world, &c.

We will now run our lines from all these general points, to see whether we can secure those cardinal points for which we set out, and which we must embrace in order to be correct. If only a part have an election, an atonement and divine influence, then, only a part can be saved. Although I will admit, that those who are saved, are saved by grace, and God receives the glory, yet, there is a part damned, and why? Because God did not design to save them; therefore, they could not be saved. Then, we have laid the damnation of those who are lost, at the door of divine agency, and so we have lost one of our leading points, designed to direct us in our system, and so it will be, if we hang every thing on man's agency. The guilt of those who are lost will lie at their own door; but remember, some are saved, and God is robbed of the glory of their salvation, for they saved themselves. But, if we give all an Election, all an atonement, and all SUFFICIENT *aid* by the Holy Spirit, then, any and every sinner may and can be saved. When a sinner may and *can*, he ought to believe; and when he ought and does, he has only

done his duty; and when he has only done his duty, he has merited nothing; and if saved without his own merit, he is saved by grace; and if saved by grace, God receives all the glory; therefore, we have gained the first point. viz. that there are some saved, and saved by grace, and God receives all the glory.

But, let us in the next place, with this general plan, lay the guilt at the door of those who are damned.

All have an Election, all have an atonement founded thereon; the spirit convinces all: then all sinners *may* and *can* be saved; and if they may and can, they *ought;* and if they ought, and refuse, they ought to be damned; and if they be damned, the guilt will lie at their own door, and heaven will be clear. *What more could the Lord have done for them that he has not done?* So I have secured both points; my system operates both ways; and of course it must be true.

ON ELECTION.

In the discussion of this subject, I propose first to consider the term—secondly the application.

1st. As to the term, it is to be understood in a gracious sense, as you may see in Romans xi. 5. where it is called an election of grace. An election of grace is not to be understood to take or choose one and leave another; for there is no grace in leaving any one; but choosing one or many to obtain salvation, when they might have been left on the principles of justice.

To make a choice, which might not have been made, evinces sovereignty; to choose to save those, who might have been damned, evinces grace. In the case of man, God did choose to do what he might not have done, and therefore, election is sovereign. But, he not only chose to do what he might not have done, but he chose to save those whom he might have damned; and therefore, it is an election of grace, or a gracious election. An election that would leave any out, when all were exactly in the same situation, would be a sovereign *partial* election, for

there would be no grace in those who were left out. Grace would only be displayed in saving the unworthy, and not in passing by a part of the unworthy.

Man must be considered as fallen, and, consequently, unworthy, when the decree of electing grace took place; and as in view of the divine mind, all things are present, so, in the first instance man is considered as chosen from the foundation of the world, or before the world began.—II. Tim. i. 9.

As to the application of the term, it is first used in a general sense—secondly in a personal sense; but both the general and personal must be understood in a *gracious sense.* All were chosen in Christ when they might have been left.

They were chosen in Christ, who died for their offences; and they were chosen, that they might be holy. The Election in the first instance, was not to a state of glory, but a state of trial, that they might be holy. &c. See the text above quoted, with many others.

The Election in the first instance, gives all Adam's family an opportunity of salvation, and suspends that salvation on such a condition as excludes boasting, and completely saves the subject by grace—as you may see in Mark. xvi. 15. Eph. ii. 8. Romans iv. 16.

Some say, that a part of the human family was chosen from eternity; others, think a certain character (the believer,) was elected from eternity; but as all are guilty and depraved, none could form the elect character without a previous election; and to leave out a part, leaves that part under fate. All must have had an election, and when any believe it becomes personal. In Christ, all have had an election: predicated on that election, all are called by the Holy Spirit, as you may see in Prov. i. 23. Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, &c. John xvi. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

There is just one thing more to make it personal—"*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,*" by yielding to the spirit who will lead you to Christ, and enable you to rest upon him for salvation; and then you will be "*elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprink-*

ling of the blood of Jesus Christ." I. Peter i. 2. "*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.*" II. Thess. ii. 13.

Every sinner *may* be saved by the death of Christ; for by virtue of his death all have an election in him; by the operations of the Holy Spirit every sinner *can* be saved, because a measure of his influence is given to every man. But every sinner must believe for *himself.* The agency of man was first tested frederally, but now personally. When a sinner believes, then all the advantages of the first and general Election become his; and as only a part believe, so only a part are elected to a state of glory.

The first and general Election was from eternity to a state of trial, that we might be holy; the second and present election, which is personal, is to a state of glory. Those who are personally elected are *justified* and *sanctified* as you may see in the following scriptures.

"*Know, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.*" Psalms iv. 3. "*Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect.*" Titus i. 1. "*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*" I. Peter i. 2.

ON THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Holiness of life is a consequence of a change of heart. This is an essential doctrine of our holy religion, about which, we all agree. But whether the real christian will persevere, and be eternally saved, is disputed. Some believe that he will, while others believe that he may fall away, lose his religion, and obtain it again, become sanctified, and yet lose it and obtain it again. We believe, however, that a real christian will not lose his religion, and finally fall into hell. But to be certain, let us reason together.

On this subject, one of two propositions must be true: either the gospel secures to the believer complete safety, at some given period, or else he is eternally in danger of falling, and if so, eternally the subject of fear, and consequently, never the subject of real happiness. This idea is contrary to the gospel, which secures to every believer complete and everlasting felicity. Therefore, the doctrine of apostacy cannot be true, and the doctrine of final perseverance must be true.

But at what period is the believer's happiness secured? Some say, at the hour of death. But if the gospel cannot secure his happiness until death, then DEATH is the GREAT thing. *It* frees him from temptation and makes his Heaven secure. But some have been secured some time before death. Job *knew* that he should see his Redeemer for himself, and Paul had finished his course. And many saints in our day have an assurance of Heaven, which they could not have, if they were in a state of uncertainty. It is true that sometimes, they have doubts (and who will not doubt, when he has a clear view of his own weakness, and especially, if in addition to this, he views the gospel as insufficient to secure him until death?) yet every time they have a spiritual view of the gospel plan, they can say, I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him, until the last day. Hence it appears that salvation is made secure on this side of death, and if so, what period is so scriptural and reasonable as the moment of conversion, when a sinner first believes in Christ and is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise?

But it is said that the doctrine of Apostacy is the safest, and therefore, must be true.

To which I would reply, that many doctrines appear good in theory, which are not so in practice, and we ought to prove all doctrines by their practical influence. No doctrine can be true, whose practical influence is bad. Both doctrines have been long believed and preached. You can judge as well as I, of their practical influence. The safest doctrine will present the fewest instances of falling, backsliding, &c. Are there fewer instances of falling, among those who preach and believe this doctrine, than among others? I think not. Why then advocate it

with so much zeal, since it does not, nor cannot produce any truly beneficial effects? I have long been of opinion that this doctrine was of no utility in the church. But we shall be asked if there is not in our country as well as in different other countries, a large and respectable denomination that have flourished under its influence. They have flourished, it is true; but rather under the doctrines of Repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ, and other essential gospel points connected with them.

Of what advantage to the pious is the doctrine of apostacy? The advantage proposed by its advocates is, that they may bring forth more of the fruit of evangelical obedience, and so live more to the glory of God. But this kind of obedience springs from one of two principles; either from that of love, or from slavish fear. It is not possible that any man acquainted with religion and his Bible, will say that it proceeds from the latter. And all that is now necessary on this subject, is to determine whether the above doctrine does, or does not induce a slavish fear. The matter is so evident, that it needs no further examination. What but frequent alarms, unnecessary fears and doubts, must be the legitimate offspring of such a belief? Now suppose, that the dread of loosing religion and going to torment, should set a christian to work—would he who knows the heart recognize such works as evangelical? I think not. Suppose you have two sons; one obeys you of choice, and from a free good will and love of your character and government, the other from a dread of the lash, and exclusion from you as an heir of your property—which renders you filial service, and which the service of a slave? And does not this father know that, if this servile principle which actuates the latter should cease to exist, that all the obedience resulting from it would come to a final close? Is this the "much fruit" by which God is glorified! Does he want slaves to grace his throne! Suppose the wicked knew that the christian was actuated by this principle—would it be to them any great recommendation of the divine government? Might they not say,—Ye are a set of slaves; Ye serve not your God from love: "Perfect love casteth out fear."

To conclude, then, upon this part of the subject, the matter stands thus.—Evangelical obedience flows from

love and not from slavish fear. The doctrine of apostacy inspires this kind of fear, and therefore this doctrine does not promote evangelical obedience, and can be of no utility to the christian.

If the standing of the Christian is infallibly secured, it is through the abounding goodness of God. And is it the nature of a christian to sin against God, because he is good to him? If so, grace is no more grace; religion is no more religion. True, if he served God only from a principle of slavish fear, his standing being secured in this condition, he would no doubt take license to unbridle all his sensual appetites. But if his heart is changed from nature to grace, and his obedience springs from a love of the divine precepts, where is the danger? The goodness of God exemplified in any and every shape, ought to have the very contrary effect, and certainly will upon every true believer. But may not the doctrine of perseverance exert a dangerous influence upon those who are deceived? I answer, no. If they will examine themselves, and for themselves, they may come to the truth. But even admitting that it might, would it be as dangerous in this respect as the doctrine of apostacy? The half hearted are very apt to disgrace their profession, and in times of trial to fall away entirely. In such cases the doctrine of perseverance presumes they never had religion, and if these persons should again think of getting to heaven, they must seek a religion different from what they had before: whereas apostacy admits they had it, but have lost it, and only exhorts them to seek the same they had before. I ask again —which is the most dangerous sentiment? The answer is unavoidable. And whatever effect the doctrine of final perseverance may have upon the half hearted, the hypocrite, I am sure it will tend to gratitude, love, humility in all true believers who are under its influence. I have heard that some have said, "If they knew they were certain of heaven, they would do as they please—cheat, defraud," &c. Then, I suppose they do not *now do* as they *please!!* A fine compliment indeed to their sincerity. But for the dread of apostatizing, or rather its consequences, away might go the service of God for them! But, perhaps, these persons do not speak as they feel, nor do I by any means design this to have a general application. I have no doubt there are thousands among those who op-

pose the doctrine of final perseverance, who would live as holy as they do, and perhaps more so under its influence. But once for all—if this sentiment encourage wickedness in Christians, there are a great number of positive assertions in the Bible which encourage wickedness, as they directly and unequivocally support this sentiment which we shall presently see.

But it is said that man is a free-agent, and the doctrine of Perseverance destroys his free-agency and therefore, cannot be true.

To this, I would reply, that if the doctrine of Perseverance destroys man's agency in this life, the doctrine of being confirmed in a state of glory destroys it also. And as we have seen, if we are never confirmed, we are never free from fear, and "fear hath torment." Consequently, we are never happy. The idea, therefore, that the doctrine of Perseverance destroys free-agency, is unscriptural and unreasonable, for the only objection that can be made to the confirming of a free-agent, amounts to this, that it cannot be done without trial; but all agree that a free-agent can be confirmed, consistently with his agency, after having passed through a state of trial. Is it not true that the whole human family have a state of trial? Now for what purpose is it? Why, that they may be confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness forever.

Was not the Christian an agent, and was not his agency consulted when his standing in Christ was secured? Had this been done without his consent, or against his will, then indeed, his agency would have been destroyed. But if his will, and the will of God concurred in this matter, wherein is his agency disturbed? Not at all. Does not the individual who comes to Christ choose him and his service, and the enjoyment of God, not only for time, but for eternity? If this be true, would he not be disappointed, should the Divine Being not secure these things unto him? I grant, indeed, if he chose religion for a limited time, or so long as it might suit his temporal convenience, or until he might take another notion,—then to impose religion, and in this condition to confirm him, would be trampling upon his agency. But whoever embraced religion under such conditions, either expressed or implied, or lodged, unperceived by us, in the deepest and darkest folds of corrupt nature? God is not to be deceived; nor would

he commit to such hands, and such hypocrisy, the *pearl of great price*. No; we must be sincere. We receive Christ under no such conditions. We choose him and his service for time and for eternity; and this is done freely, without any compulsion; and in this choice, this free voluntary act of the mind, is our agency for life, and for an eternity in heaven confirmed and established. Suppose now, that in the hour of conversion, the above choice is in substance made, (and none dare deny it,) and upon this, God secures our standing, and seals us unto the day of redemption—may we not at any period, look back and say, this is no more than what we freely chose in the moment of our deliverance? Nay, the saint of God may adopt the same language eternally in glory. Thus, I believe, that neither the doctrine of perseverance nor a glorified state, is at all inconsistent with free agency; God's securing the eternal salvation of the agent containing substantially nothing more than what he freely chose.

If the new nature or holiness existed only in exercise the subject might lose it. For, although it is impossible, for those who are born of God, to commit the sin unto death, yet through inadvertance or strong temptation, they may relax their religious efforts, and even be guilty of improprieties. The new nature, however, is a fixed principle of the heart, producing holy exercise—one is the cause, the other is the effect. And I would here ask, does the cause sustain the effect, or the effect the cause? All will agree that the latter is sustained by the former. Then it is improper to say, I shall keep my religion if I remain faithful. Holy principles are neither produced nor preserved by practice. They are impressed upon the heart by the moral image of God, and preserved by the agency of the spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. I say they are impressed upon the heart by the moral image of God, and not by physical power, as some have supposed, and that too, without any moral light. When you wish to make an impression you first set your type, and then bring it in contact with the object designed to receive the impression. The figure when made, will correspond with the type by which it was made. Although God is a sovereign, he chooses to make a moral impression on the heart of man by causing his moral excellence to shine upon it through the face of Jesus.

Once more, I would argue that the doctrine of final perseverance, in connexion with a salvation free for all, is more consistent than any other. They both completely accord with every christian's experience. I would ask, was there ever a soul converted that did not view a fulness in Christ for all men? And does not the reflection that a part of the human family is excluded from any possibility of salvation, tend to diminish the happiness of the christian? I would ask again, when, the soul is happy in the Lord, is that happiness increased by the thought that it may yet lose its religion and go to hell? I think not. Therefore, I conclude, that neither of these doctrines is taught in the Bible. If christians were more particular in maintaining doctrines that would accord with their own experience, they would not be so often driven to the extremes of either Calvinism or Armenianism, and would better enjoy their God and brethren.

It is asked, is not the christian in a state of trial while in this world. I answer, yes; but his trial differs very widely from that of a sinner. The trial of a sinner is designed to afford him an opportunity of applying to Christ for the pardon of his sin and a freedom from condemnation. But the christian has received these things: therefore, his trial is not intended to prove whether he will, but whether he has come to Christ; and to prove by his conduct, that there is a reality in religion, which religion shines brighter and brighter the more it is tried.

The conclusion seems to be this: When the profession is genuine, the trial will be sustained; but where there is a deception it will be made manifest.

The christian's stay on earth after conversion, is intended to answer several important purposes. 1. That he may be useful to others; 2. that he may enhance his own reward by his work of faith and labor of love; 3. that his christian graces may be fairly tested, which, as I before remarked, never fail to shine brighter and brighter in proportion to the trials through which he is called to pass.

Some object to the doctrine under consideration, because it is connected as they think, with eternal and unconditional election. They suppose there is no intermediate ground, between Calvinism and Armenianism. This, I have often heard expressed, and sometimes, by

those, who knew but little of the sentiments of either Calvin or Arminius. I would, by no means, disparage either of these men. They were, no doubt, both orthodox in some points, but in others, they were not. This, I presume, will be admitted by all. The Arminians surely will not contend, that Arminius understood, and taught correctly, all that is in the Bible. On the other hand, it is equally certain, that Calvin did not reach the standard of perfection, in every doctrinal point, which he inculcated. This would preclude the idea of any improvement in theological knowledge, since the days of these two divines, and compel us to embrace either one or the other of their systems, without even investigation. I, however, crave the liberty of dissenting from either or both of these great and, I hope, good men, where they have departed from the word of God. While I believe with Calvin in the final perseverance of the saints, I contend that this doctrine is not inseparably connected with eternal election. It is predicated on an appointment which takes place in time—not on one that has existed from all eternity. "Grieve not the Holy spirit of God," says Paul, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ep. iv. 30. When does this sealing take place? Hear the same Apostle: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Sealing has a variety of applications, but here we apprehend it means to confirm. After believing, then we are confirmed, "unto the day of redemption," and receive an earnest of our future inheritance. Thus, you see, that the perseverance of the saints, has no connection whatever with eternal election. It might as well be contended, that prayer or any other christian duty, was connected with eternal election; for the perseverance of the saints is nothing more than obedience, emanating from holy principles implanted in the heart in conversion.

Those who hold the doctrine of final apostacy, would think it very unfair, were I to charge them with believing the absurdities taught by Papists, Socinians and Pelagians, simply because they embrace one of their tenets, viz, falling from grace. Is it not equally unfair for Cumberland Presbyterians to be charged with holding the doctrine of eternal and unconditional election, merely because

they have published in their Confession of Faith, some of the tenets held by Calvin?

But it is said, if Angels in heaven and Adam in paradise, fell, then why may not christians fall? I answer, there is no analogy between the standing of christians and that of Angels and Adam. The latter possessed holy natures, and yet Angels fell without being tempted by any agent whatever, and Adam yielded to the first temptation. Christians possess neither the holiness of Angels nor of Adam, yet all will agree that they withstand many temptations. Therefore, they stand upon a different foundation to that of Angels, or of Adam in his primitive state. Then nothing can be inferred from the fall of either, in favor of the fall of a believer in Christ. He has Christ in him, formed in him, has his spirit, his nature, his life.

But, say some, if the real christian cannot fall, what are we to do with several passages of scripture, a number of characters and figures, that seem to hold forth the possibility of losing religion. I answer, that upon examination, I think it will be found, that these afford no arguments in favor of the doctrine of falling from grace.—I only have time at present, however, to give them a passing notice.

The 18th chapter of Ezekiel will first claim my attention. It is thought by many, that it contains incontrovertable arguments in favor of the doctrine against which I am now contending. That the reader may have a correct understanding of the true meaning of this chapter, it will be necessary for him to recollect that the Jews, in the days of the prophet Ezekiel, were in a very depraved condition—guilty of many atrocious crimes, for which he was sent to reprove them and to warn them of their approaching captivity, and to urge a speedy reformation, as the only means of escape. They would sometimes flatter themselves, that even if the prophet's message were true, yet the calamities which he threatened, were so far distant, that they would be dead and gone, before they would come. Their common proverb was, *the days are prolonged and every vision faileth.* In the chapter under consideration, they seemed to have viewed their danger as being near at hand, but attached all blame to their ancestors, saying *the fathers have eaten sour grapes and have thereby set the children's teeth on edge,* (v. 2.) i. e. their fathers

had sinned, which was about to subject them (the children) to a state of bondage to the Caldeans—they even dared to impeach the equity of God, saying, *his ways are not equal.*—v. 25. This led Ezekiel to a vindication of the divine character, from which is inferred the doctrine of falling from grace.

The prophet supposes two opposite characters—one turning from righteousness, (v. 26) the other from wickedness, (v. 27.) both of whom receive at the divine hand according to their actions: one *dies*, the other *lives*. Now, it is evident, that by this righteous man, the prophet intended to represent a former state of the Jews, when they were not guilty of the crimes with which they then stood charged, and that by departing from that state, they became exposed to the calamities which were then hastening to overtake them. I ask, *was that a converted state*, and had they all fallen from grace? It would be difficult to prove this. How many nations, besides the Jews, have brought upon themselves temporal calamities by departing from right or *righteous* actions, and indulging in certain crimes. Are we not now trembling for our *own nation*, in consequence of the crimes of Sabbath breaking and intemperance, and is not the warning voice of the watchman heard at every point, yet no one attributes this danger to the apostacy of true believers? And, whatever difficulty there may be, in understanding the prophet in the chapter before us, it is obvious that he did not mean by the righteous man turning from righteousness, to inculcate the doctrine of a true saint of God losing his religion and going to hell. His whole scope and design warrant the belief, that he intended the Jews to understand a strict analogy between themselves and the individual to whom he referred. But it is contended, that this righteous man must have been converted, because, it is added, in the next verse, *when a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, &c. he shall save his soul alive.*—v. 27. The prophet, it will be observed, was still defending the equity of God in the impending calamities of the Jews. He had just shown them, by the similitude of an individual, how they became involved—and now by the reformation of a wicked man, he points out the means of their escape. And what were those means? I answer, not conversion.

This, to be sure, was necessary in order to escape eternal death; but as I have already intimated, he was, in this place, referring to temporal calamities; and as the means of deliverance, he urges the Jews to depart from their *idolatry, whoredom, violence, oppression, &c.* If they would forsake these abominations, he gave them to understand, they should not fall into the hands of their enemies; as our preachers now tell us, that our independence can only be perpetuated by suppressing those national vices, which are every where perpetrated. If this view of the subject be correct, in order to keep up the analogy, we are to understand nothing more in the case of the wicked man, than an external reformation. But, says one, it is said *he shall save his soul alive, &c.* True, he shall be delivered from the captivity, or *saved* from those temporal judgments connected therewith. *Life* and *death*, in the scripture, according to the prophetic way of speaking, often signify external dispensations of divine providence. Deut. xxx. 15, 19, 20. Jer. xxi. 8.

If it be contended, that the prophet referred to eternal death, when he signified that the Jews had become involved by *personal sin*, (v. 20.) I know not how Paul's divinity and his can be reconciled; for Paul says, *by the disobedience of one* (Adam,) *many were made sinners.*—Rom. v. 19. Here, indeed, the children's teeth *are set on edge* by the sin of the first Father. And upon the supposition that Ezekiel referred to eternal life in the case of a *wicked man's turning, &c.* he would contradict another sentiment of the Apostle, which is, *by the obedience of one*, (Christ,) *shall many be made righteous.* Both in the fall and restoration of man, the Apostle embraces most clearly the principle of representation, which seems not to be embraced in the chapter under consideration. It is evident, therefore, that the prophet must have included in the *wicked man's turning, &c.* something less than saving grace and a right to eternal life. Of course, this chapter affords no testimony that a true believer may fall from grace and be eternally lost.

The 15th chapter of John is likewise often introduced to prove falling from grace. It contains a part of what may be called a farewell discourse, delivered by Christ to his Apostles, just after he had administered to them the memorials of his death, and announced his approaching

departure. In this parting address, he informed them, that *the hour was coming, when they should be scattered every man to his own, and that he would be left alone*, (alluding to his Crucifixion,) and that they would be tempted not only to return to their own friends in Jerusalem, but even to shrink from their Apostleship, and go back to their different occupations. In view of this solemn period, he made several precautionary suggestions, (see v. 2, 4, 5, 6.) on which is founded by many, the doctrine of apostacy. But it is evident, from a preceding part of this valadictory, that our Saviour did not intend, in these remarks, to awaken in the minds of his Apostles a fear of going to hell; for he had previously told them, that *because he lived they should also live.*—(John xiv. 19.) Nay more—he assured them that such was the *stability* of the union that existed between him and them, that it would bear a comparison to that which he sustained to his Father.—v. 20. Then, as there is no contradiction in the infallible word of Christ, he must not be understood in the cautions to which I have referred, as inculcating the doctrine of final apostacy. Let our Saviour be his own expositor in this case.—"*These things have I spoken that my joy might remain, and that your joy might be full.*" (v. 11.) i. e. I have apprised you of your trials before they happen, and of your entire dependence on me for strength to enable you to bear them—that you may not yield to fear, or be frustrated when they arrive. Should you shrink from your steadfastness, on that occasion, you will incur my displeasure, as well as diminish your own happiness. Christ did not say, these things have I spoken that you might not lose your religion and go to hell.

But we are asked, in almost every sermon preached on the doctrine of apostacy, (and, by the by, they are not few,) why caution where there is no danger. In reply, I would ask, why pray for things which would be certainly received without prayer? Reader, do not startle at this inquiry; that same divine personage did this, who delivered the cautions to his Apostles, from which the doctrine of falling from grace is inferred. "*Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*"—John xvii. 5. Did not Jesus *know all things? Yea, the deep things of God.* Then, why pray for that which he knew would take place? I was once asked by a preacher of some co-

lebrity, "*why I prayed.*" If, said he, your doctrine be true, you will be certain to get to heaven. I cited him to the passage just quoted, which evidently confounded him, and he begged time for reflection, before he would give an answer. Now, the glorification of every true believer is made just as certain, by the promises of Christ, as his was by the promise of the Father."—"*Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath* ETERNAL *life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*"—John vi. 54. "*Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*"—Col. iii. 3, 4. "*I will come again and receive you, that where I am, there ye may be also.*"—John xiv. 3. By these promises, a state of glory is made certain to every believer; yet it is their duty to pray, and it is as consistent for them to do so, as it was for Christ. Then, if prayer be consistent with a state of assurance, caution is equally so with a state of safety.

To make this subject more plain to the reader, I will instance Paul's voyage to Italy, in the course of which the ship's company became much alarmed by reason of a violent storm. At length the Apostle informed them, that not one of them should be lost.—Acts xxvii. 22, 23, 24. This prediction was founded on a divine determination to deliver them which had been revealed to Paul, by an Angel of God. But, notwithstanding this decree of heaven, the Apostle at one time gave a very serious caution: "*Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*"—v. 31.

Now, compare this case with the cautions given by Christ to his Apostles, after he had appointed them to a state of glory. "*And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"—Luke xxii. 29, 30. Here is a state of security as unequivocally fixed as an appointment of heaven can make it; yet the following cautionary language is addressed to the Apostles, the subjects of this appointment: "*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, &c.*"—John xv. 6. Now, there is no more danger to be inferred from this caution than from the one given by Paul to the shipmen.

Then, if prayer, as we have seen, be consistent with a

state of assurance, and caution with an appointment for heaven, nothing can be inferred from the cautionary language of the Bible in favor of apostacy.

Another passage relied on, to prove the doctrine of apostacy, is found in Heb. x. 26, 29. "*If we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.*"—v. 26.

Two things are necessary in order to a correct understanding of the Apostle's meaning in this text.—First, to know the persons he addressed, and secondly, the object of that address. With regard to the first, there can be no difficulty. It is evident that he addressed the Jews collectively, and it is equally clear that his object was to convince them of the great advantages of the gospel over those of the ceremonial law, and to correct the errors of those who had embraced the christian system, but still retained a predelection for the Jewish forms and ceremonies. In the passages just referred to, he seems to aim not only at purging out this old leven from the true believer, but to prevent even such as had, from the external evidences of the gospel, (perhaps inward convictions too,) embraced it as true from renouncing it under persecution, and returning to the religion of the Jews. Every body knows, that simply to assent to, or receive the truth, does not constitute a true christian.* It is also evident the Apostle could not have meant that every voluntary neglect of duty or commission of sin, (for I know of no sin without volition,) sealed the damnation of the christian. This would have contradicted the doctrine of John where he says, "*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.*"—I John ii. 1. But Paul's whole scope and design clearly warrant the belief, that he spoke with reference to the particular crime of renouncing the gospel dispensation, and returning to the ceremonial law. In all such apostacies, damnation would be inevitable; for there was no other sacrifice for sin, besides that which the gospel revealed. Therefore, it was important for them not to cast away their confidence in the truth of the gospel, (v. 35.) though they might not as yet have experienced its saving benefits.

The Apostle had the same object in view in the 28. 29. "*If he that dispised Moses' law, died without mercy,* (Deut. xvii.

*See the stony ground hearers.—Matt. xiii. 20.

2. 7.) *how shall he escape who tramples under his feet the Son of God, and regards the blood of the covenant wherewith he* (the Son of God) *was sanctified,*" or consecrated as the Saviour of the world, "*an unholy thing.*" The fact that the Apostle himself had not attained unto sanctification, (Phil. iii. 12.) and that he had in a previous part of this epistle reproved the Jews for their low attainments in religion, together with the collocation of the words of this passage, proves that he had no reference to the sanctification or personal holiness of those to whom he wrote. Then, as receiving the truth does not necessarily imply real religion, as sinning wilfully after receiving it, refers primarily to the Jews returning to their old religion, and as sanctification, in the passage before us, relates to the manner in which Christ became the Saviour of mankind,—I see nothing in this chapter to prove that a true believer may lose his religion and go to hell.

But, it is said, "*If any man draw back, &c.*"—v. 38. Does not this prove falling from grace? I answer, no. There is a wide difference in supposing a thing and in proving the reality of the thing supposed. Paul supposed that if even an Angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, he ought to "*be accursed,*"—Gal. i. 8. But this does not prove that an Angel ever had, or ever would preach in any way. True, if a genuine christian should draw back, so as to lose his religion, he would inevitably perish; but this supposition does not prove that such an event ever has or ever will take place. But suppose I admit that a just man may draw back, still there is a great difference between backsliding and drawing back "*to perdition.*" This the Apostle carefully guards, by saying, "*We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*"—v. 39.

But it is asked, if a christian may backslide, why can he not fall from grace. Let God himself answer this inquiry.—"*I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*" II Sam. vii. 14, 15.

Again it is asked, where is a man's religion, when he is backsliding: I would reply by asking, where is a man's reason when he commits an unreasonable act? Is he not

still a rational being? And surely it will not be contended, that a man ceases to be a christian so soon as he departs in thought, word or action, from the requirements of our holy religion. This would involve sinless perfection, to which none, except a few fanatics make pretentions. But, says one, what would become of a christian, were he to die in a backsliden state. Before I answer this inquiry, reader, permit me to ask you one or two questions.—Do you believe you have religion? Are you as happy now as you have been? If you are not, then, you are a backslider. Sin has separated between you and your God. Now, what would become of you, were you this moment to die? God would reclaim you. So, I say, concerning every genuine christian.

Again, it is thought, that chapter vi. 4, 6. of this same epistle, inculcate the doctrine against which I am now contending. "*For it is impossible for those, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*"

Now, it is scarcely necessary for me to introduce an argument, to prove that the Apostle had no allusion here, to a truly converted man: he, himself, has determined this matter, (v. 8.) by the similitude of the earth bringing forth nothing but briars and thorns, after being dressed, receiving rain from heaven, &c. I have often been astonished that persons with this explanation before them, would rely for a moment on these passages to prove the doctrine of apostacy; for the earth referred to by the apostle, as a fit emblem of the character that he had just described, never yielded any fruit; therefore, could not represent genuine christians. They are represented by the soil that brings forth *good fruit*. Mat. xiii, 23.

But, if the passages under consideration, prove the possibiltiy of losing religion, they also prove the impossibility of getting it again.—v. 6. And, indeed, upon the supposition of apostacy being true, it would seem to me, every way reasonable to suppose, that the apostate never could be restored; for it is admitted on all hands, that sinners, *before conversion*, by rejecting light and abusing

privileges, may lose their day of grace. But, I ask, can a sinner, under any circumstances, reject as much light and abuse as many privileges, as the christian would do, were he to throw away his religion. Surely not. Then, if a christian were to fall, his damnation would be inevitable. Some, to avoid this difficulty, have applied the scriptures in question, only to those who are sanctified. *If they shall fall away, it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance.* Poor encouragement this, indeed, to seek sanctification, as it is taught by those who hold the doctrine of falling from grace! They admit, I presume, that regenerated people go to heaven when they die, though they never obtained sanctification until their dying hour. Then, would it not be more safe to possess low attainments in religion, than to become sanctified and still be liable to fall—and what is worse, have no prospect of rising again?

But this application of the Apostle's language, seems to me, to be entirely without foundation. Indeed, I think, it will appear, upon a minute examination, that he was so far from speaking of those who were sanctified, that his description falls very far short of true christians.

"*They were once enlightened.*" Are not all men enlightened? "*They had tasted the heavenly gift and been partakers of the Holy Ghost*, i. e. they had received of the Holy Ghost, power to work miracles, which was called a heavenly gift. It is evident, that in the days of the Apostle's, such power was, in some instances, unaccompanied with saving grace. "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, &c. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.*" Mat. vii. 22. Origen and others, afford corroborating testimony, that devils were cast out among the Jews, by those who were strangers to true piety. But, should this explanation be rejected, I will insist that a sinner may receive a heavenly gift, consisting of divine influence, and partake of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of conviction—as the spirit of bondage unto fear—(Rom. viii. 15.) and yet have no religion. Again, they tasted the good word of God: so did Herod; (Mark. vi. 20.) so did the stony ground hearers: "*But he that received the seed, into stony places, the same is he that heareth* THE WORD, *and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he* NOT *in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribula-*

tion or persecution ariseth, because of the word by and by, he is offended." Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Here the word is received and of course *tasted;* but who would say that this character ever obtained religion? I pass to the last characteristic. They tasted the powers of the world to come. This referred to the christian dispensation, under which many have felt powerful impressions, but have stopped short of true conversion. The meaning, however, will not be altered, if we suppose the Apostle to allude to an invisible state. The soul tasts by feeling, and who does not know, that sinners feel the reality of heaven and hell, and, may make some efforts to escape the one as well as indulge pleasing anticipations of the other, and yet remain strangers to genuine religion? Acts xxiv. 25. xxvi. 28. Mat. xxv. 1, 12.

With regard to the characters so often introduced to prove falling from grace, the limits of my pamphlet will, at present, restrict me to very few remarks, which I will confine entirely to the case of Judas; in which it is thought we have incontrovertible evidence of total and final apostacy. It will, however, be necessary, before this can be admitted, to prove that Judas was ever truly converted; for this has never yet been done to my satisfaction.

The first argument in favor of the piety of Judas, is drawn from the following scripture: "*Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted his heel against me.*" Ps. xli. 9. This passage seems to be applied to Judas by our Saviour.—John xiii. 18. *Mine own familiar friend.*—Surely, says one, Judas could not have been a friend without being a christian. I ask, was he still a christian after he had joined the wicked mob to betray Christ? Well, after he had done this, Jesus called him friend. "*And Jesus said unto him, friend wherefore art thou come,*" &c. Mat. xxvi. 50. But it is urged the Saviour trusted in Judas. Whatever may be the meaning of this expression, I think, it cannot be pretended that Christ ever regarded him as a loyal subject; for it is expressly said, that *he knew he would betray him,* (John xiii. 11.) and that he knew it from the beginning.—John vi. 64. The truth is, we are to understand nothing more in the passage quoted from Ps. than expressions corresponding with the *profession* of Judas—not that Christ ever regarded him as his

true friend, or trusted in him according to the true meaning of this term.

The second evidence introduced to prove that Judas was a christian, is, that he wrought miracles. To this I would reply, that it has already been shown, that a power to work miracles was something separate and distinct from real religion. Balaam possessed miraculous knowledge, that is, a spirit of prophecy; (Num. xxiv. 2—17.) yet, I presume, no body believes he was a good man. Now, what is the difference between miraculous knowledge and miraculous power? Both come from God and have been possessed by unconverted men. Then, a power to work miracles affords no evidence that Judas was a true christian.

But it is said, Judas was given to Christ. True, but in what sense? Surely not as a true believer. I request the reader to examine the history of this case minutely. "*Then one of the twelve called Judas Iscariot, went unto the high Priests and said unto them, what will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you.*" Mat. xxvi. 14, 15. Observe, this was before the sacrament. If Judas fell from grace, it must have been previous to the administration of this ordinance. Now turn to what Christ said after the communion, in his sacerdotal prayer, of those that had been given unto him. "*Thou givest them me, and they have kept thy word.*" John xvii. 6. The reader will discover that Christ in verses 6, 7, and 8. is speaking of the conversion of his Apostles, where Judas is not included; for he had previously sold his Lord and renounced his word; therefore, what is said in these verses, could not have been true concerning Judas. Hence, he had not been given to Christ, *in conversion*, as had been the other Apostles. But in v. 12 Christ alludes to his Apostles, as having been given to him in another sense, in which Judas is included, viz. as external disciples.

But, says one, Judas was chosen by Christ. Yes, I answer, chosen as a student, but not unto eternal life.—"*I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.*" John xiii. 18. In this choice Judas is not included.

Again, it is said, Judas was sent to preach, and the inquiry is frequently made with an air of triumph, would Christ send an unconverted man to preach the gospel? It is true Judas was suffered to remain with the Apostles,

though he had not received the word from the lips of Christ as they had done.—John xvii. 6, 7, 8. Our Saviour did not see proper to execute the discipline of the church on him, as God, knowing the hearts of men. While on earth, he chose to act in conformity to his government of the church in after ages. And, doubtless, there have been, and are now, but too many Judases in the church. But, is she less under the government of Christ now, than she was then.

But it is still urged, that if I believe Judas had no religion, I am under the necessity of believing also, that Christ calls and sends forth unconverted men to preach the gospel. I would just reply, that those who believe Judas *had* religion, and *lost* it, are involved in a similar difficulty, viz. that it is the will of Christ, that men should retain the ministerial office after their apostacy; for he did not depose Judas, but suffered him to remain with the Apostles, and even administered the sacrament to him, after he had covenanted with the Priests to destroy him.

But, if I had no other proof that Judas was from the beginning an irreligious man, the following would be sufficient.—"*Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you* IS A DEVIL," (John vi. 70.) a fallen spirit. This was before Satan entered into Judas to betray Christ. Luke xxii. 3. John xiii. 2. He was also called a thief prior to this time.—John xii. 6. These, I think, are bad marks of christianity.

The figures which seem to favor the doctrine of falling from grace, such as *twice dead*, to my mind, refer to the almost christian: to those characters who, after having died in Adam, were placed under the quickening influence of the spirit, but rejected the light until it departed, after which they were no more quickened. Perhaps there is no metaphor better calculated to represent this deplorable situation of the sinner, than a tree, not only dead, but plucked up by the roots, from which we may learn that there was no possibility of its ever being revived.

Again, the sow, after she was washed, returned to her wallowing in the mire. All that I have to say on this subject, is, had her nature been changed and rendered innocent and clean, she no doubt, would have pursued a different course; and had the character designed to be represented by this figure, been changed in heart, *he would*

have remained with us. But for the want of a new nature, it has *happened unto him like the sow that was washed, &c. He went out from us that it might be manifest that he was not of us. Had he been of us, he no doubt would have continued with us.*

I will now conclude by noticing a few passages of scripture in favor of final perseverance: some have already been brought to view, which it will not be necessary here to repeat.

"*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*"—I John iii. 9. We are not to understand sinless perfection here. This would contradict other parts of the word of God. Chap. i. 8—10. The Apostle gives his meaning in chap. v. 16. where he speaks of the *sin unto death*, and this is the sin which those who are born of God cannot commit; therefore they shall never die.

"*For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"—Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Observe the manner in which this triumphant language is introduced. "I am persuaded." By whom was Paul persuaded? Surely not by the Devil, but by the Spirit of God. Then he was not deceived when he made this daring challenge to the enemies of the true believer. Life is desirable, and death is terrible; but neither the one nor the other shall be able to separate us from the love of God. "*Nor angels, principalities nor powers.*" Good angels will not, for they are the friends of the christian; bad angels cannot, for, altho' they are enemies, *they are restrained enemies.* "*Nor principalities nor powers.*" i. e. the powers of civil authority. A Nero may rage, and others may vent their spite, but all combined shall not be able to effect a separation between Christ and the christian. "*Nor things present nor things to come.*" I have often heard attempts made to evade the force of this passage, by saying, that nothing but sin could effect a christian's fall; but surely the Apostle included this in *things present. Nor heights nor depths, nor any other creature,* i. e. neither prosperity nor adversity, nor any thing that can be named or thought of. If the Apostle did not believe in the impossibility of losing

religion when he uttered this language, surely words have no meaning.

"*And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*" Jer. xxxii. 40. It is supposed by some, that this promise only extended to Israel according to the flesh, but in as much as there seem to be spiritual blessings couched in it, I think it also belongs to *Israelites indeed*, and that every true christian may claim the benefit of it. In this promise God pledges himself never to leave nor forsake his people. O but, says one, that is not what we are in danger of. The great danger lies in us forsaking God. But the promise under consideration provides against this also. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* God *knows* if his people be left to themselves, they will depart from him, but he has determined not to do this.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. "My Father who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands." John x. 27, 28, 29. What language could be stronger? From it we learn that christians now have eternal life: *not temporary life*, which would be the case, were they to fall from grace. This, however, they cannot do, for he who is greater than all, has them in his hand and none is able to pluck them *out of his hand.*

"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and* SHALL NOT *come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*" John v. 24. Here the present state of the believer is first brought to view. He has endless life begun in his soul. It is then most clearly shown that this life will never be forfeited, for he SHALL NOT *come into condemnation.*

The above quotations are but a brief specimen of what the word of God says concerning the security of the saints. It would be needless to multiply. The reader will discover that the passages we have recited are direct in their application, and too positive in their declarations to admit of doubt with regard to their true meaning. This, I think, is not the character of those introduced to prove final apostacy. Their application is doubtful. Indeed, I never saw the first positive text of scripture to prove this doctrine.

A

BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

In giving a succinct account of the origin and progress of this infant branch of Zion, I will observe in the first place, that the revival of religion in the Presbyterian church, out of which Cumberland Presbyterians sprang, was brought about by the ordinary means, though used in an *extraordinary* way.

The Rev. James M'Gready,* with a few other individuals of Logan County, Ky. near the close of the last century, began, like the remnant of Israel in the days of Ahab, to mourn over the desolations of Zion. At length they drew up and adopted the following preamble and covenant.—

"When we consider the word and promises of a compassionate God, to the poor lost family of Adam, we find the strongest encouragement for christians to pray in faith—to ask in the name of Jesus for the conversion of their fellow men. None ever went to Christ, when on earth, with the case of their friends that were denied, and, although the days of his humiliation are ended, yet for the encouragement of his people, he has left it on record, that where two or three agree, upon earth, to ask in prayer, *believing*, it shall be done. Again, *whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* With these promises before us, we feel encouraged to unite our supplications to a prayer hearing God, for the outpouring of his spirit, that his people may be quickened and

*It was under the preaching of this venerable Father in Israel, that the work of God first appeared in Kentucky.

comforted, and that our children, and sinners generally, may be converted. Therefore, we bind ourselves to observe the third Saturday of each month, for one year, as a day of fasting and prayer, for the conversion of sinners in Logan County and throughout the world. We also engage to spend one half hour every Saturday evening, beginning at the sitting of the sun, and one half hour every Sabbath morning, at the rising of the sun, in pleading with God to revive his work."

The Great Head of the church evidently owned and blessed this extraordinary effort, and soon commenced a powerful revival of religion, in the bounds of the Transylvania Presbytery. This Presbytery was divided in 1802, by the Synod of Kentucky, and the Cumberland Presbytery formed, including most of the preachers that had been active in promoting the revival, and embracing many of the societies that had been converted and organized after the revival commenced. The measures adopted for the purpose of perpetuating and extending this glorious work of God, and for the purpose of supplying newly organized congregations with preaching, soon incurred the displeasure of Synod, which will appear in the following letter.

CIRCULAR LETTER,

Addressed to the Societies and Brethren of the Presbyterian Church, recently under the care of the Council, by the late Cumberland Presbytery; in which there is a correct statement of the origin, progress and termination of the difference between the Synod of Kentucky, and the former Presbytery of Cumberland.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The time is at last come when we must either sacrifice our religious liberties and conscience, to what we judge unreasonable demands, cease our endeavors to promote the work of God among you as we have hitherto done, or constitute a Presbytery separate from the Synod of Kentucky. We choose the latter as the only alternative, in which we can have the answer of a good conscience. We therefore deem it expedient to give you a retrospective view of the cause, together with the progressive means, by which matters have been brought to this issue.

A number of you will easily recollect, that about the

close of the last century, or beginning of the present, God, in a very remarkable manner, began to revive his work amongst the inhabitants of this western country. The first symptoms of which, appeared under the ministerial labors of the Rev. James M'Gready, in Logan county. At the first commencement of this glorious revival, as also in its progress, the bodily affections and exercises of a number of those who were its subjects, were very uncommon. This soon caused a rumor to go abroad, and the people from every quarter *came out to see.* The consequence of which was, they not only had their curiosity satisfied, but a great number had their hearts deeply affected. This, in the hand of God, was a blessed mean of spreading the WORK through various parts of our country. For a while, at first, all the ministers in our bounds, seemed to participate in the glorious effusion of the holy spirit, and correspondent to this, proclaimed themselves friends to the RIVIVAL. But alas! it was soon after discoverable, that some of them had changed their opinion, otherwise they had never been well established. The consequence of this apparent change, may easily be inferred; notwithstanding the work still progressed. And although the few who remained friends to the revival, labored in the work of the Ministry *night and day*, yet the cries of the people for more preaching, were incessant; and those cries soon became so general, that they were heard from many parts of an extensive frontier. The ministers, in return, could only pity, and pray for them; the congregations being so numerous, and in such a scattered situation, that they could not by any possible endeavor supply them.

About this time, a venerable Father in the ministry,* who was then resident in one of the upper counties of Kentucky, came down and attended a communion with some of our preachers in a vacant congregation: and he, having learned the situation of our country, and the pressing demand that there was for more preaching, proposed the plan of encouraging such amongst us, as appeared to be men of good talents, and who also discovered a disposition to exercise their gifts in a public way, to preach the gospel, although they might not have acquired that degree of human education, which the letter of discipline requires.

*Rev. DAVID RICE.

This proposition was truly pleasing to our preachers, and indeed, it found general acceptance amongst the people, as soon as intimations thereof were given. The consequence was, an uncommon spirit of prayer now seemed to prevail throughout the societies, that the great head of the church would, not only open an effectual door into the ministry, but also that he would raise up, qualify, and bring men into that sacred office, whose labors he would own and bless. And, brethren, that God who never told *Israel to seek him in vain*, evidently heard and answered the prayers of his people. Some, whose minds had been previously impressed with the duty of calling sinners to repentance, and of bearing public testimony to the work of God and the religion of Jesus Christ, and upon whom also the eyes of the church for some time had been fixed with a degree of expectation, now made their exercise of mind on this subject, known to their Fathers in the ministry. The prospect was truly pleasing to the preachers, yet they considered it expedient to act with the greatest caution: for although the step about to be taken, was not unprecedented in the Presbyterian church, yet, seeing it was out of the common track, they were well aware that some of their brethren in the ministry would oppose the measure. However, they ventured to encourage three or four of the young men to prepare written discourses, and present them to the Transylvania Presbytery as a specimen of their abilities. They accordingly prepared discourses, and at the next stated session of said Presbytery, their case was brought before that reverend body. They met with warm opposition, arising principally, however, from a quarter rather inimical to the revival. But after a lengthy conversation on the subject, in which there was much altercation, a majority of the members consented and agreed, that the young men might be permitted to read their discourses to an aged member alone, who should make report to the Judicature. We believe the report was favorable. It was then directed, as well as we can recollect, that those men should prepare other discourses to be read at the next Presbytery. They accordingly prepared, and three of them attended; but, as soon as the subject of their case was resumed, a warm debate ensued. At length, however, a majority of the members agreed to hear their discourses. After they were read, the question was put:

"Shall these men be received as candidates for the ministry?" The vote being taken, one of the three was received, and two rejected by a majority of one vote only. This circumstance much depressed the spirits of a number of the preachers, who were real friends to the revival, and likewise the congregations generally, who had so earnestly desired their licensure; but more especially the spirits of those two candidates were depressed. They were men in a matrimonial state, and could not consistently with those relative duties, by which they were bound to their families, go and acquire the knowledge of all those forms of literature required by the book of discipline. Fain would they have returned home, and solaced themselves in the enjoyment of their domestic comforts, as private christians, if they could have done so, and kept a good conscience: but this they could not do; nor could they with clearness become members of any other christian society, where the ministerial door was not so straight and difficult, and consequently, where they might have been at liberty to exercise their popular talents with approbation. No: they were attached to all the essential doctrines, and likewise the discipline of the Presbyterian church. It was in this church they were early dedicated to God by their parents, and in this church they first felt the power of the gospel upon their hearts, and tasted the sweetness of that grace, which brings salvation to man. Therefore, in the communion of this church they earnestly desired to live and die.

By this time a number of others, who were generally esteemed eminent for gifts and piety, together with those who had already offered as candidates, became solemnly impressed to proclaim the word of life and salvation to sinners. But alas! the door of admittance seemed to be shut against them.

In this dark state of matters, both the ministers themselves, and likewise the candidates, who had already offered, and others who were looking forward towards the ministry, together with all the societies in our bounds, began now, in good earnest, to realize the necessity of crying mightily to that God, who has church Judicatures in his hands, as well as the hearts of individuals. In the mean time, candidates, and other eminent characters, who were assiduously endeavoring in one way or another to

promote the work of God, were encouraged by their fathers in the ministry to continue the exercise of their gifts in a way of public exhortation, which several of them did, laboring much till the next Presbytery; at which time, several petitions were presented with hundreds of signatures, praying the Presbytery to license and send to their relief certain denominated persons. The subject was again taken into consideration, after which the Presbytery that was personally acquainted with those men embraced in the petitions, knowing their piety, soundness in the faith, *aptness to teach*, &c. and taking into view the situation of the congregations, and the extraordinary demand for preaching, determined to hear trial sermons from three or four of them (at the then present session) to be considered as popular discourses: which accordingly were delivered, and sustained by a large majority of the Judicature. And after an examination on various subjects, touching the ministry, which was also sustained, they were "lincensed to preach the gospel within the bounds of the Transylvania Presbytery, or wherever else, God in his providence, might call them."

Certain members who had always been opposed to the measure, entered their protest against the proceedings of the majority. But the majority were not deterred thereby, from pursuing in their official capacity, that method, which they conscientiously believed best calculated to promote the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

The Synod not long after this, divided the Transylvania Presbytery, and formed what was called the Cumberland Presbytery, the bounds of which included all the members that attended the preceding session of the Transylvania Presbytery. This act gave a decided majority in the new Presbytery to the promoters of the revival, and those who were friendly to the licensure of the aforementioned young men; which majority, ever after continued and increased until the Presbytery were dissolved.

The licensing of these men, on the petition of the congregations, seemed to be a mean in God's hand of increasing, instead of decreasing, the demand for supplies. They, (the preachers,) *laboring both night and day*, leaving their families for a considerable length of time, preaching the word, planting new societies, and watering those that were planted, would necessarily increase such demand, if

attended with divine influence. And, brethren, we need only appeal to many of you, to witness the success that evidently attended those men's labors. The feeling and experience of your own hearts are better evidences to you on that subject, than all the reasons that could be advanced. *Though you may have ten thonsand instructers, yet you have not many fathers in Christ.*

The Presbytery, in pursuing what they believed to be their duty, continued from time to time to license and ordain such men, both learned and unlearned, (what is meant by unlearned here, is not a want of common English education,) as they thought would be useful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. And, if the old maxim be a good one, ("judge of causes by their effects,") the Presbytery will never have just cause to regret that they engaged in, and pursued such measures: for it is an incontestible fact judging by our Lord's rule, (*By their fruit ye shall know them*) that there are multitudes of *both men and women* who will have cause to rejoice eternally that ever they heard those men preach a crucified Christ.

The members who entered their protest, sent a petition to the next session of Synod, refering them to the protest, "which they thought should have operated as an appeal," in which, they complained of various irregularities in the Cumberland Presbytery with respect to the licensure and ordination of men to the ministry. The Synod at that time, did or said but little about the matter; but, at their succeeding session, they appointed a Commission of Synod to meet shortly afterwards in the bounds of the Cumberland Presbytery at Gasper river, and directed certain members of the Commission to cite previously to that meeting, all our preachers, licentiates, candidates, and public exhorters,* who generally met in obedience to the citation.

We would observe here brethren, that although the appointment of the Commission was, we hope, well intended, yet we believe it was unhappily selected as to a part of it, from what appeared in the prosecution of their mission.

*There was much noise about so many exhorters having been authorized by the Presbytery. The members thought with the apostle, that it was the duty and privilege of all christians to exhort in some manner; and the design they had in licensing such as made application was to give them more weight among the people, without the most distant prospect of licensing them to preach except those whose talents might justify such an act

A number of that body however, both preachers and elders, were meek and friendly disposed men, who felt themselves as brethren, disposed to pursue the most pacific measures, according to their order from the stated Synod, to heal the breach, that threatened the church. But on the contrary it is notorious, that another part of that body were men of different tempers; and it was an unfortunate circumstance that those men were the most forward influential members.

After the Commission had met, and also the accused who were then known as the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery, the Commission selected from the minutes, and other sources, a number of irregularities, as chargeable against the majority of the Presbytery, all of which, however, were comprised in the two following particulars viz: 1st. The licensing unlearned men, or such as had not been examined on the learned languages, &c. 2dly. That those men, who were licensed, both learned and unlearned, were only required to adopt the Confession of Faith partially; that is as far as they believed it to agree with the word of God.

As to the first ground of complaint, the Presbytery not only plead the exception made in the discipline in extraordinary cases, but also the example of a number of the Presbyteries in different parts of the United States.*

*Among the many instances of this kind that might be mentioned, are the following, viz. Mr. Beck who was received by the Presbytery in N. Carolina —M. Bloodworth, by Orange—Mr. Moore by Hanover—Mr. Marquis by Redstone, and Mr. Kemper and Abell by the Transylvania Presbytery. Likewise, in Pennsylvania many years ago, a poor illiterate man, a native of Wales, conceiving that he had an internal call to preach the gospel, made his case known to the Presbytery. But, because he was not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to undergo an examination on it, or in any other but his mother tongue, the Presbytery therefore, instead of treating him without notice, sent to Virginia for President Davis, who was also a native of Wales, to perform the necessary examination previous to licensure, who on his return to Virginia, declared that he never had assisted in bringing a man into the ministry with greater freedom in his life.

In short, the majority of Cumberland Presbytery, were of opinion, that the compilers of the Confession of Faith and discipline of our church, never intended the rules there laid down for examination and trial of candidates for the ministry, to be considered an infallible standard by which the Holy Ghost must be limited, when he calls men to that sacred office. They had no doubt but that reverend body, at the same time that they laid down those prudential rules, believed that the great Head of the church could, and actually did, when he thought proper, bring men into the ministry without the aid of those literary qualifications: and if granted that he might in one instance, why not in more; yea, why not in many. Who will limit the Holy one of Israel?

They moreover appealed to a higher authority, than either of the foregoing, which was the new TESTAMENT, and inquired if there was any precept or example in that, which condemned the practice of licensing what they (the Commission) called unlearned men to preach the gospel. It was likewise asked, if God could not as easily CALL a Presbyterian to preach, who had not a liberal education, as he could a Methodist or Baptist, a number of whom, are acknowledged to be respectable and useful ministers of Jesus Christ.

As to the second point, the Synod had suggested that the candidates could have adopted the "Alkoran," in the same manner they adopted the Confession of Faith. This was acknowledged to be literally true, but not applicable in the case of the young men; for the Presbytery contended that the very act of the candidates receiving the Confession at all, was an evidence that they esteemed it above all HUMAN creeds; and the exception, or condition, in which they were indulged, was only designed to meet some consciencious scruples, in points not fundamental nor essential, particularly the idea of FATALITY, that seemed to some of them to be there taught under the high and mysterious doctrine of predestination.

The reasons offered by the Presbytery, on these points, did not appear satisfactory to the commission of Synod: therefore, much altercation took place, during which time, no doubt but Christ was wounded *in the house of his friends*, by some, perhaps, of both Judicatures. It is well recollected, at any rate, that the Presbytery during the debate, were often reminded by certain members of the Commission, that they stood at the Commissioners' BAR! Indeed, brethren, it appeared to us very evident, that some of the leading members of that body, assumed attitudes and an authority, which but illy comported with the character of ministers of the meek and lowly Jesus, sent on a pacific mission.

After much reasoning, as well as positive assertion on the subject, the Commission demanded of the Presbytery, to give up to them all those men whom they had licensed and ordained for re-examination. The Presbytery refused, suggesting the danger of the example, and also that such a demand was without precedent. They moreover declared, that they believed the discipline of the Presby-

terian church had vested the sole power in the several Presbyteries, to judge of the faith, and qualifications of their own candidates for the Ministry.*

After the refusal of the Presbytery, the Moderator of the Commission, proceeded to adjure the young men to submit to their authority and be re-examined, when one of them asked liberty for himself and brethren to retire, and ask counsel of God before they would give an answer. This reasonable request was, at first, strongly opposed by one or two leading members of the Commission but at length it was granted, and the young men retired to ask counsel of HIM who is all wise. In a short time after they returned, when they were asked, individually, if they would submit as above. They all, except one or two, who wanted longer time to deliberate, answered in the negative, for the following reasons, viz: First. They believed the Cumberland Presbytery, which was a regular Church Judicature, to be competent judges of the faith and abilities of their own candidates. Secondly, That they themselves had not been charged with heresy and immorality, and, if they had, the Presbytery would have been the proper Judicature first to have called them to an account. Notwithstanding the Commission of Synod proceeded formally to prohibit all the men, learned and unlearned, whom the Cumberland Presbytery had licensed and ordained, from preaching the gospel in the name of Presbyterians, and also, cited what was called the Old Members to attend the next stated session of Synod, to be examined on faith, and to answer for not having given up their young brethren to be re-examined!

Here, brethren, we would ask, knowing that a number of you have been thirty or forty years regular members of the Presbyterian church, if ever you knew an instance, either in Europe or America, of a Synod undertaking to prohibit preachers, who had not been accused by their own or any other Presbytery? We would also ask, if ever you knew an instance of any reformed church Judicature silencing a minister or ministers, who had not been charged with heresy, immorality nor even what our dis-

*On the principles of the Commission's demand, no Presbytery would know when there was an addition made to their body by a new ordination, in as much as the next Synod might demand a re-examination of the newly ordained minister, judge him unqualified, and declare he should no longer preach as a Presbyterian.

cipline calls contumacy? This was certainly the case with the young men. That is, they were not charged with either of the above, yet, they were prohibited and the Presbytery censured because they would not acknowledge the authority by which it was done.

The members of Presbytery then retired (but not in a Presbyterial capacity) to consult what was best to be done, and after deliberation, they agreed to encourage the young men to continue the exercise of their respective functions, which they themselves determined to do, except in such business as required the act of a Presbytery.

Some months after, there was a general meeting or Council, held at Shilo consisting of the ministers, elders, and representatives from vacancies, which formerly composed a majority of Cumberland Presbytery. At that Council, it was agreed on to petition the General Assembly; and in the mean time, cease our operations as a Presbytery; but continue to meet from time to time in the capacity of a Council, and promote the interests of the church as well as we could, until an answer could be obtained from the Assembly. The Council, at this meeting, unanimously declared it to be their opinion, that the Commission of Synod had acted contrary to Discipline, which opinion was corroborated by the next Assembly, (tho' not officially,) according to a private letter from a respectable member of that body, a part of which is as follows.

"The unhappy differences in your quarter, so immediately succeeding what a great proportion of the Presbyterian interest, in this place, believed to be a great revival of the work of God, has excited deep concern, and our General Assembly have had the matter fully before them. It appeared to be the decided opinion of the majority in the General Assembly, that no Synod have a right to proceed against ministers or individuals, except the matter shall have come before them, by appeal from the Presbytery.—That only a Presbytery could call its members to account for errors in doctrine or practice.—That a man once ordained by a Presbytery is an ordained minister, though the Presbytery may have acted improperly in not requiring the due qualification; and that even a Presbytery could not afterwards depose, but for cause arising, or made public after ordination; that licentiates are al-

ways in the power of their Presbytery to examine them and to withdraw their licensure at discretion: but, that a Synod may act against a Presbytery as such, by dissolving, dividing, censuring, &c. consequently, that the dealings with Cumberland Presbytery were legal, in dissolving them, and annexing them to Transylvania, but wholly improper in suspending ordained ministers, and still more improper was it, for a Commission of Synod to do it. But though the rule about knowledge of languages in our discipline is not often fully complied with, and though the rule is not found in the scriptures, yet it is so important, that though your case was an imperious one, yet they seemed to fear you had gone too far, especially in the licensures. But what the General Assembly hath finally done, will appear very inconclusive on these points; because they wished to avoid offending the Synod and the Presbytery; and the minority in the Assembly took advantage of this, to make the business end as much as possible in such a manner, as not to be construed against the power of Synods and General Assemblies. The General Assembly have, however, questioned the regularity of the proceedings of your Synod."

You may see brethren, in the foregoing extracts, what was the decided opinion of what may be called the collected wisdom of the Presbyterian church in the United States on the points for which we contend. And, perhaps, in examining the list of Commissioners who composed the Assembly, the members will be found to stand as high for learning, integrity and piety as a subsequent Assembly, which differed with them in opinion. You will moreover see the reason why we were not profited by the favorable opinion of the Assembly. As to the Assembly's fearing we had 'gone too far in the licensures,' we will not pretend to say their fears were altogether without foundation; nevertheless, the Presbytery that have been without sin on this subject, 'may cast the first stone.'—That is, the Presbytery that have licensed as many as the Cumberland Presbytery have done, and have licensed no improper person to preach the gospel.*

The Assembly addressed a letter to the Synod inform-

*The Cumberland Presbytery have reason to thank God, that every man whom they licensed, except one individual, continues to believe, preach and practice the gospel of Christ.

ing them, that what they had done 'was at least of questionable regularity,' and requested them to review their proceedings, and rectify what might have been done amiss. The Synod we understood, reviewed, but confirmed all their Commission had done. The Council, notwithstanding, were encouraged to forward another petition, after which they were informed by a private letter, from another influential member of the Assembly, that it would be most proper for them to apply to the Synod to rescind their former order, as it respected the Presbytery; and if they refused, then for the Council to appeal to the Assembly, which 'no doubt would redress their grievances.' The official letter of that Assembly, not having come to hand, the Council thought it prudent to postpone doing any thing in it, until such letter could be seen. After it was seen, a number of the members of Council, thought the prospect of a redress of grievances not flattering; and at the next Council it was voted by a large majority to go into a constituted state, and in that capacity, address the General Assembly; but by reason of the minority refusing to acquiesce in what the majority had done, the Council did not still constitute a Presbytery. After some time, some of those who were of the majority, felt willing to comply with the recommendation of the member, who wrote to us, and told us to go up by appeal from the Synod, but before there was an opportunity of doing it, we heard to our astonishment, that the Assembly had decided in favor of the Synod. This step at once superceded the necessity of an appeal; therefore the Council generally thought it was now time, to constitute into a Presbytery, and proceed to business again in that capacity. But some of the members, wished to make the last effort with the Synod, which now had the business in their own hands, and the whole agreed at the Ridge Meeting house in August last, to propose their last terms, and forward them to the Transylvania Presbytery, or Synod, by two Commissioners to be appointed for that purpose, which was accordingly done, and the terms in substance were as follows:

"We, the preachers belonging to the Council, both old and young, from a sincere desire to be in union with the general body of the Presbyterian church, are willing to be examined on the tenets of our holy religion, by the Transylvania Presbytery, Synod, or a committee appointed for

that purpose; taking along the idea, however, that we be received or rejected as a connected body. Also, all our ministers, ordained and licentiates retain their former authority derived from the Cumberland Presbytery. It was moreover understood, that if the Synod should require the preachers to re-adopt the Confession of Faith, that it should be with the exception of FATALITY only." Our Commissioners were directed to go, and take a copy of the above minute, without any discretionary power whatever, to alter the propositions in any way, and it was unanimously agreed and determined, that if the Synod would not accede to the propositions, that on the fourth Tuesday in Oct. ensuing, the whole Council would go into a constituted state. The Commissioners accordingly went to the Synod; and after their return, informed us that the Synod would not consider our case as a body, but as individuals; neither would they suffer any of our preachers to make the exception to the Confession of Faith. The Commissioners, notwithstanding, obtained an order for an intermediate Presbytery 'to be held at Green Town, to consider the case of Mr. Hodge and others.' Here, brethren, we will insert for your information, the Minute of the last Council, and also the preamble to the Minute of our first Presbytery.

"The Council met at Shilo, agreeably to adjournment on the fourth Tuesday in October, 1809. Whereupon Mr. King was appointed to the Chair, and Thomas Donald Clerk. The Council opened by prayer.

"Enquiry was made, what progress the Commissioners had made at the Transylvania Presbytery or Synod, towards bringing about a reconciliation; and how those Judicatures had treated the propositions of the Council. Mr. Hodge, after some preliminary remarks, in which he suggested, that he thought the Commissioners had obtained a compliance with the substance of the Council's propositions, read a copy of a petition he had presented to the Synod and the Synod's order on that petition. After the matter was discussed, and after the Minute of the last Council on that subject was read, and compared with the petition and order above; the vote was taken whether or not the Synod had complied with the propositions of the Council, which was decided in the negative, by a very large majority. The vote was then taken, whether or not

the Council would put the resolution of last Council into execution, which went solemnly to declare, that unless the Synod acceded to their propositions, they would on this day, constitute into a Presbytery, which was carried in the affirmative by a large majority; after which Messrs. William and Samuel Hodge, ministers, and Thomas Donald, elder, withdrew from the Council, virtually declaring their intention to join the Transylvania Presbytery. There being then only three ordained ministers present, it was inquired whether they were now ready to go into a constituted state; when it was found that one of them was embarrassed in his mind. The Council then adjourned and met again, waiting the decision of that member: who at length declared he could not feel free at the present time to constitute. The Council then, together with all the licentiates and candidates present, formed into a committee and entered upon a free conversation on the subject before them; when it was finally agreed to, that each ordained minister, licentiate, elder, and representative should continue in union, and use their influence to keep the societies in union, until the third Tuesday in March next; and then meet at the Ridge Meeting house. After which, each one shall be released from this bond, unless previously to that time, three ordained ministers belonging to this body shall have constituted a Presbytery. Then, in that case, the committee will all consider the BOND of union perpetual; which Presbytery, after doing such business as they may think proper, are to adjourn to meet at the Ridge Meeting house the said third Tuesday in March in a Presbyterial capacity." SAMUEL KING, Chairman.

"In Dixon County, Tennessee State, at the Rev. Samuel M'Adow's this 4th day of February, 1810.

"We Samuel M'Adow, Finis Ewing, and Samuel King, regularly ordained ministers, in the Presbyterian church, against whom no charge, either of immorality or heresy has ever been exhibited, before any of the church Judicatures, having waited in vain more than four years, in the mean time, petitioning the General Assembly for a redress of grievances, and a restoration of our violated rights, have, and do hereby agree and determine, to constitute into a Presbytery, known by the name of the Cumberland Presbytery, on the following conditions.

All candidates for the ministry, who may hereafter be

licensed by this Presbytery, and all the licentiates or probationers, who may hereafter be ordained by this Presbytery, shall be required, before such licensure and ordination, to receive and adopt the Confession and Discipline of the Presbyterian church, except the idea of fatality, that seems to be taught under the mysterious doctrine of predestination. It is to be understood, however, that such as can clearly receive the Confession, without an exception, shall not be required to make any. Moreover, all licentiates before they are set apart to the whole work of the ministry, or ordained, shall be required to undergo an examination on English Grammar, Geography, Astronomy, Natural and Moral Philosophy, and Church History.* The Presbytery may also require an examination on all, or any part, of the above branches of literature before licensure if they deem it expedient."

Thus, brethren, we have, in the integrity of our hearts, endeavored to give you as correct and impartial an account of the rise and progress of the cause or causes, that have brought us into our present situation, as justice to ourselves, and our best recollection would admit. We have not intentionally and unjustly exposed or covered the conduct of any man or Judicature. We have only aimed at giving a clear, honest view of the matter, that you might be enabled to judge for yourselves whether we have acted with propriety or impropriety.

We think, precipitancy or rashness cannot be justly imputed to us in the present case. We have waited in an unorganized state, for more than four years, and in that time, have repeatedly prayed the Judicatures to redress our grievances; and have not contended for one privilege but what we conscienciously believe God's word allows us. If we had sought or desired an occasion to make a chism in the church, we had an excellent pretext, after the unprecedented conduct of the Commission of Synod towards us. But instead of this, we voluntarily suspended our operations as a Presbytery, and waited from year to year, beset on every side, hoping the matter might be settled on principles just and equitable. We said "beset on every side." Yes, brethren, a number of you know that various sectaries took the advantage of our forbearance and

*It will not be understood that examinations on experimental religion and Theology will be omitted.

peculiar situation, and endeavored to rend our flourishing congregations. The swarms of heretics and fanetics also, who came down from the upper counties of Kentucky, gave us much perplexity; yet we determined, through grace to stand firm, and continue to appeal to the reason and justice of the higher Judicatures, until we were assured they were not disposed to restore our rights. This assurance we have at lentgh obtained, and there was no alternative left us, but either to violate our solemn vows to our brethren, act contrary to our reason and conscience, or form ourselves into a Presbytery, separate from the Kentucky Synod. This step, at first view, may alarm some of you; but be assured, brethren, that although we are not NOW united to the Presbyterian church by the external bond of discipline, that we feel as much union in heart as formally; and we would further assure you, that we have not set up as a party, inimical to the general Presbyterian church:—no: we, ourselves, are Presbyterians, and expect ever to remain so, whether united to the general body or not.

Permit us further to inform you what we do know to be an incontestable fact. That is, there are a number of ministers who are kept in the bosom of the Presbyterian church, who have deviated infinitely more from the Confession than we have done. One can boldly deny the imputation of Christ's active obedience to the sinner in justification, and published it to the world—another can deny the operation of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration,* and yet, we, who only object to the unqualified idea of ETERNAL reprobation, cannot be indulged in that objection!

It has been said that if all the ministers belonging to the Council, had continued together, and had constituted into a Presbytery, it would have been much better. Brethren, if individuals, for reasons best known to themselves, and their God, have thought proper to change a position in which we thought God had blessed them, we have not yet felt at liberty to do so likewise. We have to account to God, and our own conscience how we have acted in this matter.

Some have feared because of the smallness of our num-

*See Mr. Davis' publication in S. Carolina and Mr. Craighead's of Tenn.

ber. Brethren, we have yet left, in the bounds of our Presbytery, almost as many ministers, exclusive of candidates, as our blessed Lord chose to spread the gospel through the world. And whilst we acknowledge the greatest inferiority to those twelve CHAMPIONS of the gospel, yet, we profess to believe that neither the standing, nor reputation of a people depends on their numbers. If this were admitted, the Roman church, when it was at its zenith of superstition and idolatry, would have been the most permanent, and respectable in the world. But the reformation and subsequent events have taught us that was not the case with her. But notwithstanding, some individuals have changed their ground, yet, as far as we have learned, but very few of the numerous and respectable societies or congregations have abandoned us: and some individuals of those few, were partly constrained to do as they have done, from their local situation.

Some of you are afraid you cannot be supplied by the Presbytery. Brethren, the same Almighty *Lord of the harvest*, who heard your prayers on that subject ten years ago, is willing to hear again. *Is the harvest* indeed *great and the laborers few?* well then, pray the Lord to send more laborers.

Some fear lest the Presbytery should take too much liberty in licensing and ordaining unlearned men. If by this you mean, you are afraid the Presbytery, in some instances, will dispense with the dead languages, your fears are well grounded. But if you are afraid we will license and ordain without a good English education, we hope your fears are without foundation. And while we thus candidly declare our intention to receive men as candidates, without a knowledge of the languages, who are men of good talents, and who appear to be evidently CALLED of God, believing, as we do, that there are thousands in the Presbyterian church of such description, who would make more able, respectable, and more useful ministers of Jesus Christ, than many who say they have been brought up at the feet of Gamalial: we would nevertheless recommend it to all parents who have sons who promise fair for the ministry, to have them taught the Greek language, especially the Greek Testament. Some of us intend to do ourselves what we here recommend, and thereby more fully convince you of our sincerity.

We would just add, that we have it in view as a Presbytery to continue, or make another proposition to the Synod of Kentucky, or some other Synod, for a re-union. if we can obtain it without violating our natural and scriptural rights, it will meet the most ardent wish of our hearts; If we cannot, we hope to be enabled to commit ourselves and cause to HIM who is able to keep us. Brethren, if we live at the feet of the Redeemer and feel constant dependence on Him, we are not afraid but that he will be our God and director. And if *God be for us who can be against us?* We therefore entreat you brethren, *to watch and be sober.*

Cultivate friendship with all societies of Christians, who maintain the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and whose lives comport with their profession; but avoid the multitude of deceivers, who have gone out into the world, and strike at the root of all real religion.—Avoid them we entreat you, as you would the open enemies of the cross of Christ.

Gird on the whole armour of God. Fight the good fight of faith, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you. Amen." SAMUEL M'ADOW, Moderator.

Test YOUNG EWING, Clerk.

Notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties with which this infant church has had to contend, its members have continued to increase, and every year has augured more and more favorable for its stability.

The first Presbytery became so much enlarged in the course of three years, that in April, 1813, at the Beach meeting house, Tenn. it was resolved to divide it and form three subordinate Judicatories, which should constitute a Synod. The following minute is the preamble to this decision, and presents a pleasing prospect of the gradual increase of Cumberland Presbyterians.

"Whereas, the Cumberland Preybytery have made every reasonable effort for a re-union with the Presbyterian church; and whereas, the extent of our bounds and the number and local situation of our members, now render it inconvenient to do business in but one Presbytery; and whereas, the constitution of a Synod is desirable, and we hope will be productive of good consequences in various

ways, particularly as a tribunal having appellant jurisdiction: Resolved" &c.

Five of the members were ordered to meet at Mt. Carmel meeting house, Tenn. on the 1st Tuesday of the ensuing August, to constitute the Elk Presbytery, and four others were appointed to constitute the Logan Presbytery, on the 5th Tuesday of the same month, at Red River meeting house, Ky. These Presbyteries were directed to meet the Cumberland Presbytery on the 5th of the next Oct. at the Beach meeting house, Tenn. to constitute the Cumberland Synod, which was done accordingly.

Soon after the close of the late war, the tide of emigration began to flow rapidly westward, which greatly multiplied demands for preaching; so that it seemed for a time, utterly impossible to meet them. The members of the church, however, were requested by Synod to observe the 4th Monday of May, 1817, as a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God to revive his work and send forth more laborers into his vineyard. The Great Head of Zion evidently heard the cries of his people; the succeeding summer was a time of much interest to the church; and in the fall many young men of promising talents became candidates for the ministry. This added fresh life to the Body, and inspired new settlements of the West and South with a hope of yet being supplied with preaching. This hope was not disappointed. A goodly number of young laborers soon entered the field for the purpose of gathering up the scattered disciples of Christ, and to call guilty multitudes to repentance. The consequence was, those that had been sighing in the wilderness and weeping by the water courses, because there was none to break to them the bread of life, were made to cry out *how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.* Stupid sinners were also awakened, and many precious revivals of religion immediately commenced.

Here was discovered more clearly than ever, the providence of God in raising up the Cumberland Presbyterians. A large portion of the western population were partial to the Presbyterian form of church government, though they could not receive all their doctrinal sentiments. But had the Presbyterian sentiments been generally embraced, still

they were at that time, comparatively without funds to educate ministers, or to send them into the field after they *were* educated, and there were no prospects of salaries from the frontiers; therefore, but few of their clergymen were to be found in the whitened harvest of the West. It is also true, that the peculiarities of the Methodists and Baptists were thought by many to be unsupported by the word of God; consequently they were unwilling to place themselves and families under the ministry of either denomination. At this important crisis, the *Lord of the harvest* was pleased to raise up the Cumberland Presbyterians, and direct them to take a midway stand between Calvinism and Armenianism; and to open a school for the purpose of qualifying men for the ministry that had been previously unknown in the Presbyterian church, viz. *an itinerant school.* In this seminary, scores of young heralds of the cross were fitted for the sacred desk, and strange as it may appear, many of them far surpassed the College missionaries of the East. While some were waiting for Education Societies to open the door for them into the ministry, and others who had already entered, were waiting for Missionary Societies to send them into the field, these Cumberland Pioneers, moved on with the tide of emigration, submitting to all the privations and hardships peculiar to new settlements, with but little prospect of any reward in this life, except the pleasure of saving souls. Upon the whole, I firmly believe, that thousands are now in heaven, and others are on their way thither, who never would have been saved, had it not been for the labors of Cumberland Presbyterians, and that God has yet an important part for them to act in spreading the conquests of the Redeemer's Cross.

The following brief sketch of the constitution of the several Presbyteries, will show the rapid growth of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, in the course of the last twelve years.

At Sugg's Creek, Tenn. Oct. 22, 1819, the McGee Presbytery was stricken off from the Logan Presbytery, by an order of Synod, and ordered to be constituted in Missouri, (then a Territory,) on the 4th Tuesday of May following.

The Synod in session at Russellville, Oct. 18, 1821, divided the Elk Presbytery, and directed two new Presbyteries to be constituted—one to be known by the name of

the Alabama, and the other the Tennessee Presbytery. At this Synod, also, the Anderson Presbytery was stricken off from the Logan Presbytery, and the Lebanon from the Nashville Presbytery.

By an order of Synod, at the Beach meeting house, Tenn. Oct. 16, 1822, the Illinois Presbytery was stricken off from Anderson and McGee Presbyteries.

On 24th Oct. 1823, by the authority of Synod, at Russellville, the Alabama Presbytery, owing to the remote situation of its members from each other, the difficulty of meeting in time of high water, &c. was dissolved and a part of its members, with two from the Tennessee Presbytery, were appointed to constitute the Bigby Presbytery. The balance of the members of Alabama were attached to the Tennessee Presbytery. At this same Synod, the McGee Presbytery was divided for the purpose of constituting the Arkansas Presbytery.

At Cane Creek meeting house, Oct. 22, 1824, owing to additions to the ministry, change of residence, &c. preachers were appointed by Synod to re-organize the Alabama Presbytery. At this session, the Hopewell Presbytery was also stricken off from the Nashville Presbytery. It was moreover deemed indispensible, either to divide the Synod and form a General Assembly, or revise the Constitution of the church, so as to admit of a delegated Synod. The question was therefore submitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries.

At the Synod at Princeton, Ky. Oct. 25, 1825, the Anderson Presbytery was divided, and the Indiana Presbytery required to be constituted.

A constitutional majority of the Presbyteries reported to this Synod in favor of a General Assembly.

After discussing the question at some length, by mutual consent, a decision was postponed till another meeting of the Synod.

At this session, Commissioners were appointed to select a site for Cumberland College. They met in January following, and after examining several places, decided in favor of the vicinity of Princeton. The institution went into practical operation on the first day of the ensuing March, on the manuel labor plan. It now numbers about sixty students, and is in a tolerably flourishing condition.

No new Presbyteries were formed in 1826.

The Barnett and Knoxville Presbyteries were appointed to be constituted, by order of Synod in session at Russellville, Ky. Nov. 21, 1827.—The former was taken from the McGee and the latter from the Lebanon Presbyteries.

Oct. 21, 1828, the Synod at Franklin, Tenn. ordered the St. Louis Presbytery to be constituted, and to be taken from the Arkansas Presbytery. Also Princeton Presbytery was stricken from Anderson and the Sangamon from Illinois Presbyteries.

The subject of Temperance was discussed at this session of Synod, and the following resolution unanimously adopted—

"Resolved, that the preachers belonging to the Cumberland Presbyterian church, both ordained and licensed and likewise the different members, be requested to unite in discountenancing the unnecessary use of ardent spirits in their several congregations and families, and where ever else their influence may extend."

Pursuant to this resolution, Temperance Associations have been formed throughout the bounds of the church, and hundreds and thousands have been induced to abandon entirely the use of the intoxicating fluid.

The subject of a General Assembly was again brought before the Synod, while in session at Franklin, and after considerable discussion, it was resolved to come to a decision on this important matter. Before the vote was taken, an aged member arose and recited the solemn manner in which the first *Presbytery* was constituted. The fear of God seemed to fall on every mind, and breathless silence pervaded the house for several minutes. It was then proposed that the oldest preacher present, should implore direction from heaven. The Rev. Jas. B. Porter, being the oldest member present, was called on to discharge this duty. Before prayer, he recurred in a brief, but feeling manner, to the difficulties through which Cumberland Presbyterians had already passed, and to the kind providence of God, that had been displayed in their protection. During prayer, much access seemed to be enjoyed to a throne of grace; and every member of the house appeared to realize his responsibility to the Great Head of the church, for the part he was about to act. The votes were

then called for—when it appeared a large majority were in favor of a General Assembly.

The Cumberland Synod was then, by mutual consent divided, and the four following Synods ordered to be constituted, viz. The Missouri Synod, embracing the McGee, Barnett, Illinois, St. Louis, Sangamon and Arkansas Presbyteries: the Green River Synod, composed of the Logan, Anderson, Indiana and Princeton Presbyteries: the Franklin Synod, embracing the Nashville, Lebanon, Knoxville and Hopewell Prosbyteries: the Columbia Synod, consisting of the Elk, Tennessee, Bigby and Alabama Presbyteries.

The bounds of these Synods have been much enlarged since they were constituted, and the following new Presbyteries formed, viz. Within the limits of the Green River Synod, the Kentucky, Washington and Wabash Presbyteries: in Franklin Synod, the Forked-Deer and Hatchey Presbyteries: and in the Columbia Synod, the Elyton and Mississippi Presbyteries.

It will be seen from this brief sketch, that Cumberland Presbyterians have, at present, twenty-five Presbyteries, four Synods, and a General Assembly.

Their number of preachers is thought to be near four hundred, besides many candidates for the ministry. But in as much as a statistical account of their congregations and ministers has never yet been made out, their numerical strength cannot at this time be certainly known. Some have expressed surprise that this should have been neglected until so late a period. It is in my view, however, very far from being a censurable omission. Too frequent a display of numbers has always seemed to me to savour of ostentation; and I have thought such conduct was apt to beget an *undue* and *unsanctified* eagerness for the *procurement* of numbers. Nevertheless, as there appears to be so much anxiety among other denominations, to know the number of members, in the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and some very inaccurate conjectures have recently been published on this subject, it is probable their statistics will be shortly submitted to the public.

The operations of Cumberland Presbyterians have heretofore been principally confined to the following portion of the valley of the Mississippi, viz. The States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Illinois, Indi-

ana and the Arkansas Territory. This year, however, they have had a most glorious revival in the western part of the State of Pennsylvania, the influence of which is felt to some extent in the State of New York. Several flourishing societies have recently been formed in that section of country—and the work is still progressing.

They have kept up the practice of holding campmeetings in their congregations, ever since their organization as a Body. Indeed, this custom was *first introduced* by that part of the Presbyterian church, that afterwards became Cumberland Presbyterians. About three hundred of these meetings are now held every year, at which many profess to obtain religion: on some occasions two hundred and upwards.

At first, this denomination, like all other branches of the church, *while in infancy*, met with considerable opposition from other sectaries. They have, however, been blessed with much union in feeling and effort, as well as in doctrine, among themselves, and have ever kept their pulpits and communion open to all orthodox christians.

They have cordially united with other denominations in advancing the benevolent enterprises of the present day. The salutary influence of Sabbath Schools is felt, to a considerable extent throughout their bounds, and they have had for several years a Missionary School in the Chickasaw nation. It has recently, however, been deemed expedient to close the operations of this institution, owing to the unsettled state of the Indians.

On the subject of the doctrines of Cumberland Presbyterians, I need say but little, in as much as their Confession of Faith has long since been before the public. I will subjoin, however, the following extract from Buck's Theological Dictionary, which will give a brief outline of their views.

1st. "They hold that Adam was made upright, pure and *free;* that he was necessarily under the moral law, which binds all intelligences; and having transgressed it, he was consequently, with all his posterity exposed to eternal punishment and misery.

2d. That Christ the second Adam represented just as many as the first, consequently made an atonement for all, "which will be testified in due time." But that the benefit of that atonement will be only received by the true believer.

3d. That all Adam's family are totally depraved, "conceived in sin; going astray from the womb, and all children of wrath;" therefore must "be born again," justified and sanctified, or they never can enter into the kingdom of God.

4th. That justification is by faith alone as the INSTRUMENT; by the merits of Christ's active and passive obedience, as the *meritorious* cause; and by the operation of God's Spirit, as the *efficient*, or active cause.

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5th. That as the sinner is justified on the account of Christ's righteousness being imputed or accounted to him; on the same account he will be enabled to go on from one degree of grace to another, in a progressive life of sanctification, until he is fit to be gathered into the garner of God, who will certainly take to glory every one who has been really justified: that is, he, Christ has become wisdom, (light to convice) righteousness, (to justify) sanctification, (to cleanse) and redemption, (to glorify,) to every truly regenerated soul.

6th. That there are three persons in one God, co-equal, essential, and eternal; or the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost: that the mediator is very God and very man; two distinct natures in one person; therefore while the humanity obeys and suffers, there is infinite worth or merit given to that obedience and suffering, by the union of the divinity.

They dissent from the Confession—in, 1st, That there are no *eternal* reprobates.—2d, That Christ died not for a *part only*, but for *all* mankind.—3d, That all infants, dying in infancy are saved through Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit.—4th, That the Spirit of God operates on the *world*, or as co-extensively as Christ has made the atonement, in such a manner as to leave all men inexcusable.

As to the doctrines of predestination and election, they think, (with many eminent and modest divines who have written on the subject,) they are mysterious, and they are not well pleased with the application that rigid Calvinists, or Armenians make of them. They think the truth, on *that*, as well as many other points in divinity, lies between the opposite extremes. They are confident however, that those doctrines should not, or the one hand be so construed as to make any thing the creature has done, or *can* do, at all meritorious in his salvation; or to lay any ground to say "well done!;" or to take the least degree of the honor of our justification and perseverance from God's unmerited grace, and Christ's pure righteousness. On the other hand, they are equally confident those doctrines should not be so construed as to make God the author of sin, directly or indirectly; either of Adam's sin, or any subsequent sin of his fallen race; or to contradict the express and repeated declarations of God's word, on the extent of the atonement and operations of the Spirit; or to contradict the sincerity of God's expostulations with sinners, and make his oath to have no meaning, when he swears he has no pleasure in their death; or to resolve the whole character of the Deity into his sovereignty, without a due regard to all other of his adorable attributes. Finally, they think those doctrines ought to be thought and spoken of in a consistency with God's moral government, which always has for its object the happiness of his intelligent creatures, when it consists with his justice, and the honor of the divine throne."

They baptize infants, where one or both the parents are believers in Christ, and permit believing adults, who have not been baptized in infancy, to select their own mode of baptism. They are induced to grant this privilege from a belief that the Bible neither specifies the quantity of water to be used in baptism, nor the mode of receiving it. Therefore, they think the subjects of this ordinance, have as good a right to a choice for themselves, as communicants have at the Lord's Table, some of whom take more bread and wine, and others a less quantity. Cumberland Presbyterians view these two ordinances equal in point of importance, and do not feel at liberty to impose restrictions in administering them, where the word of God imposes none.

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